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MONRO

BY

JOHN HARRIS F.R.H.S.

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THE

LONGFELLOW COLLECTION

GIVEN BY

MISS ALICE M. LONGFELLOW,

In behalf of the family of the late Professor
HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

Received 20 Dec. 1894.

A New Year's
Souvenir for 1880
To the Poet
H W Longfellow
with the author's
admiration and
esteem.

E W Harris.

In silence seated, musing there his fill.

Monro, Book First, page IV.

MONRO

BY

JOHN HARRIS,

Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

AUTHOR OF "WAYSIDE PICTURES, HYMNS, AND POEMS,"
"THE TWO GIANTS," "TALES AND POEMS," ETC.

LONDON:
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.
FALMOUTH: THE AUTHOR.
1879.

23451.9.5

Harvard College Library
Gift of
Miss Longfellow, Mrs. Dana,
and Mrs. Thorp,
20 Dec. 1894.

PRINTED BY J. GILL AND SON, MACHINE PRINTERS,

PENRYN, CORNWALL

PREFACE.

This is the author's fourteenth volume of prose and verse, which he has published on his own responsibility. He claims no more for these poems than that which has already been freely accorded to his former productions—viz., originality and simplicity.

It will at once be obvious to the reader that the hero of the poem which gives the title to the book is none other than the writer himself! Should the penning of this piece be an incentive to the youth of his own country to cultivate the gifts which God has given them, and to persevere in the path of duty, he feels he shall not have written in vain.

The small wood engravings throughout the work are the earnest efforts of the author's self-taught invalid son, who is very desirous to succeed in his adopted art, and to make it the basis of his future livelihood. The writer has been induced to publish the Shakespere Tercentenary Prize Poem in this collection, as it is occasionally enquired for, and for some time past has only been available in his larger volume.

He warmly thanks his willing-hearted friends and patrons once more for their kind encouragement

in the evening of his life, and trusts his fourteenth volume may not be less acceptable to them, and to the appreciative public, than its predecessors have been.

Up, and do thy duty;
Time brooks no delay:
Wait not for a morrow
Brighter than to-day.
Thou hast but the present,
Gird thee to the fight;
What the Master biddeth
Do with all thy might.

KILLIGREW TERRACE, FALMOUTH,
DECEMBER, 1879.

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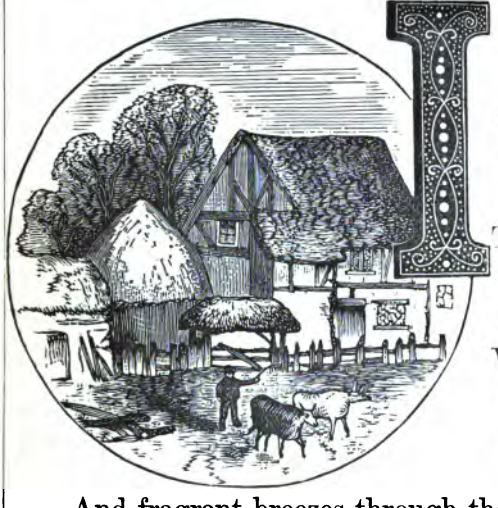
ARGUMENT OF BOOK FIRST.

Invocation—Monro's Birth—October Calm—The Loving Nurse—Cradle Song—Flora's Favourite—The Daisy Gatherer—The Bird's Nest—The Village Schoolmistress—Quaint Attire—The Maid of Song—Moonlight—Lonely Moss Heap—Land of Rhyme—Early Teachers—Sheep Watching—Team Driving—The Good Spirit—The Mother's Tale—The Blazing Brand—Fairies—Neglected Genius — Pleasant Reminiscence — Monro's Father—Ploughing—Sowing — Corn Cutting — Queen Mab—War and Peace—Sabbath Bells—The Preacher—Contentment—Hope—Faith—The Best Book—Death of the Christian—An Honest Name—The Best Fortune—Field Labour—The Magic Key — Saxon Poem — Poet Ploughman — The Muse's Gift — Monro's Study—Singing Larks—The Red Horse—Rustic Reed—Dreamy Hours—Sheep Bells—Mountain Trumpets—Echoes—Love of Nature—Birds—Hill Nymphs—Evening Story—Heron's Cry—Fruits of Solitude—Joy Cup — Peasant's Marvel — Bell Flowers—Nature's Gifts—March Winds—Sod Heaps—Hedge-row Meal—Dying Fire—Olden Lays—Tillers of the Ground—Breezy Heights—Thyme Beds — Wafts of Odour — Shore of Emerald—Gentleness—The Pilgrim—Divine Trust — Proposed Remedy—The King and the Cross—Startling Events — The Solemn Echo.

MONRO.

BOOK FIRST.



I SEEK Thine aid,
Thou who didst lonely sit
The weary Way-farer by Jacob's well,
While beauteous birds among the olives flit,
And fragrant breezes through the cedars swell.
Inspire my thought, that I may simply tell
The tale of one among the boulders bred,
And how he wrought, and what to him befel,
Where dainty fern-fays o'er the mosses sped,
And Music swept her harp upon the mountain's head.

He oped his eyes in the October calm,
When every rill ran songful through the shade,
When Nature breathed her ripest, richest balm,
And orchard-branches to the sward were weighed;
When lay-full leaves, with edges half-decayed,
Rang song and sonnet to the rolling year,
And Beauty donned her berries in the glade,
And voices walked the willows far and near,
And fell like old-world psalms upon the listening ear.

His gentle mother nursed her fair first-born,
And called him Monro in her dream of joy;
And prayed she for him ever night and morn,
And rocked the cradle, singing to her boy.
A bliss was hers the world could not destroy,
Or the great clamour marching o'er the steep;
Nor Want's worn visage at the hearth annoy.
Her love was like an angel's, pure and deep:
She hushed him when he sighed, and kissed him in his sleep.

She soothed his sobbings with the simplest sounds,
The simplest words and tenderest looks that be;
While in the dell the waterfall resounds,
As it foams onward by the hollow tree.
"Do good, my child, though no good comes to thee.
The highest task is to relieve distress,
To save a brother from the boiling sea
Of bitter waters, when huge woes oppress,
And wintry darkness drops upon life's wilderness.

"Let love and mercy in thy bosom reign,
And hold not back thy hand in time of need;
Be thou the soother of another's pain,
Nor ever cause thy neighbour's heart to bleed.
For Worth and Virtue and pale Pity plead,
And serve thy Maker with a faith sincere,
So shall Jehovah bless the pious deed,
And give my child a richer portion here,
And more than tongue can tell in that eternal sphere."

The boy expanded in the air of heaven, [gay;
Which flowed o'er moors and fields with flowerets
And when a greater, growing strength was given,
Among the buds and blossoms oft he lay,
Himself a pledge-plant of the sunniest ray:
Primroses clustered o'er him and across;
With his bright forehead and fair curls they play,
So that he looked, beside the mountain fosse,
Like Flora's favourite child sweet-slumbering in the moss.

And then with toddling step he left the door,
To pull the grasses in the waste-land free,
To treasure up his shining moss-cup store,
Or snatch the daisies from the nearest lea;
Till boyhood taught him where all bright things be,
Which hide in hedgerows, or by lichened stone,
Nor least the bird's nest by the broken tree,
With trailing vetch and ivy overgrown,
Where half-fledged linnets lay, was to his keen eye known.

To school he went with satchel in his hand,
Where sycamores o'erhung the reedy eaves,
Intent to honour the stern Dame's command,
Clad in a bedgown with the quaintest sleeves;
Its pattern was the wain and harvest sheaves;
She on her head a cap of muslin wore,
Which she lays by when dusky twilight leaves
The hills with silence and the softened roar
Which summer ocean sighs on rock and fading shore.

Then first he met among the silvery streams,
And glowing thyme-banks by the old hedge-stiles,
The Maid of Song, whose brow of mildness beams
With holiest light that flows from other isles.
Entranced he was with her delicious smiles,
And sounds that followed him from rock to rock,
Where green ferns stand in ever-graceful files,
And moorland fairies on the moonbeams flock,
And Echo sounds her trump on every rended block.

You might have seen him when the sun was low,
And the white moon was stealing o'er the hill,
By some lone moss-heap where the waters flow,
And murmuring sounds come from the distant mill,
In silence seated, musing there his fill.
In schoolboy dress, with brightness on his brow;
And oft his heart would with pure pleasure thrill,
When song-shreds flowed from bush and leafy bough,
Or gushed from grasses green, as it will flutter now.

So step by step into the land of rhyme,
Where hills of roses slope into the sky,
And silver waters make melodious chime,
Young Monro wandered, though he scarce knew why;
Leaving his playmates their new toys to buy,
Leaving his marbles treasured in their place,
Scanning the landscape with poetic eye,
Delighted thus some bright-winged thought to chace,
Where rainbows drop their gold, and marvel at the race.

He knew not then that every trembling leaf,
And ringing echo pressed across the moor,
The floweret clinging to the lonely reef,
Or smiling sweetly by the ploughman's door,
His teachers were, replete with richest lore,
Whose power would strengthen with his growing years,
Till song shall cease, and anxious thought be o'er,
And full fruition dissipate his fears,
And rains descend no more upon the vale of tears.

In pathless crofts he heard the Spirit's voice,
Along the tarn, and by the clearest stream,
Where the bright birds amid the trees rejoice,
And myriad insects in the grasses gleam;
Watching the sheep, or with the patient team,
And when his green bag from his shoulder fell,
As he to school did mid the rushes dream,
Smiting his conscience like a muffled bell,
Till he obeyed the call, and felt it must be well.

Young as he was, he heard the voice of God
Among the bushes clustered on the brea,
In every plant that beautified the sod,
Or dear wild flower that sparkled in the way.
This his good father taught him day by day,
When winds were low, or the great storm was high.
Bright angels seemed to smile on every spray,
And throng the heath, and mid the violets lie,
And sweep with spangled wings across the glittering sky.

And how shall I describe the evening tale
His mother told beside the blazing brand,
When strangest voices filled the hollow vale,
And night came dropping on the silent land?
It seemed to him as if some mystic hand
Were drawing figures on the cottage wall,
And fairies perched on every household stand,
And tinselled beings from the rafters call,
Or strut along the thatch, or from the wood-hole sprawl.

For hours would Monro at his mother's feet
Sit in the twilight, listening to her lay,—
Of those who left their much-loved home-retreat
To walk this selfish world to preach and pray;
Of hope expiring under long delay;
Of genius hidden in some reedy cell;
Of virtue trodden in the public way;
Of good men clothed in rags, ill-fed as well,
Punished, and pressed, and peeled, and forced in caves to dwell.

And oft a brightness would illume his face,
And mystic visions throng his busy brain,
As new-born thoughts each other strangely chase
O'er lakes of lilies, and then back again.
How much he loved that mother's gentle strain,
Which brings e'en now upon his cheek the tears,
Although they are not, were not, drops of pain,
Nor ever will be, though the end he nears!
Her life is still prolonged to more than fourscore years.

His father was with honest hinds enrolled,
Unskilled in letters, save the Book Divine.
Some mountain sheep he kept without a fold,
A steady horse, and still some steadier kine.
His mother's heart all gentle things enshrine,
Which filled his opening hours with rosy light,
As fancy-fraught he roved mid peak and pine,
And read the lore of Nature's loneliest height,
And ever taught himself by all things pure and bright.

His sire pursued his tasks with ceaseless care,
From morn till eve, throughout the changing year,
No time to waste, no idle hours to spare
At village gatherings with his pipe and beer.
To plough the meadows with the simplest gear,
To sow the oats upon the harrowed sod,
The corn to cut, the harvest mow to rear,
Forward and backward to the mine to plod,
But more than all to walk uprightly with his God.

He sowed the seed, and waited for the shower,
Which surely comes to him who digs or delves,
Believing ever in a higher power,
That Providence helps those who help themselves.

No faith had he in charms, or meadow elves,
Or Queen Mab haying when the moon was clear:
Twas God who brought the brown bread on the shelves,
And blest the fruitage of the autumn year,
And filled the heart of man with every needful cheer.

Content with little, he was heard to say
That peace was what the jarring world required;
That war brought desolation and dismay,
Where'er a pike was thrust, or rifle fired;
That slayers sinned, although by Christians hired.
And prayed he ever in his closet-bower,
That the destroyer's arm might soon grow tired,
And Peace sing songs on the dismantled tower,
And corn-ears hide the moat and roses in full flower.

Thus his good father's holy love of peace
Inspired with tenderness his opening years,
Henceforth to labour that the sword should cease,
The storm of cannon, and the rage of spears.
In his young dreams he saw the widow's tears,
Heard the deep groanings of the sabred sire,
And caught the echo tumbling through the spheres,
That God is angry with the embattled fire,
That blow for blow is wrong, though Kings the guilt require.

To church he led him on the Sabbath morn,
When bells were pealing o'er the emerald mead,
Through lanes of lilies, fields of waving corn,
And pathways musical with rustling reed;
Beseeching him to give attentive heed
To what the preacher might be led to say,
How Christ atoned for erring man's misdeed,
And took the contrite sinner's guilt away,
And broke the bars of death, and oped eternal day.

And in the quiet of the humble pew,
The thoughtful Monro's tears would often fall,
Gladly assembled with the faithful few,
Who in their hearts upon Jehovah call.
And prayed he to the gracious Lord of all,
That he His faithful follower might be,
Nor with mysterious themes his mind enthrall,
Nor to the mighty Moloch bow the knee,
But to the King of Kings his homage render free.

His words were few, whatever might betide,
And gentle always as the summer rain:
Humility o'erpowered his native pride,
Nor, though the meal was low, dared he complain.
He knew the sun would surely shine again,
Although the clouds might gather overhead,
And sudden darkness fill the distant plain,
And muffled trumpets sound their requiem dread:
His faith unwavering rose—God's people must be fed.

One Book had he all other books above,
And this he made his constant guide and friend:
Within its pages was the Well of Love,
Whose healing waters never know an end.
From this he drank, though worldly ills might rend,
Till broke the pitcher at the fountain's side,
And to the brightness did he swift ascend,
Borne strangely upward on the angelic tide,
And heaven's pearl gates for him at once were opened wide.

No lands were left him by his Christian sire,
No bonds of treasure in a foreign clime,
No gold to gild him with the name of squire,
No bartons bounded with the fruits of time:
An honest name, a character sublime,
A reputation without rent or blot,
A pathway to the flowery fields of rhyme,
Though from the doorway of a reedy cot,
This, this was Monro's dower, which wealth could purchase not.

For what is nobler than a stainless name,
An upright lifetime in this world of wrong?
Tis as a feather in the scale of fame,
Or richest diamond, though its light be strong.
The fairest farms the watching hills among,
Priceless domains where milk and honey flow,
And deer browze leaf-hid all the season long,
Are dust and ashes, sprinkled deep with woe,
Compared with stores of truth which from such sources flow.

And Monro laboured with him in the fields,
To dig the ditch or drive the patient team,
To hoard the roots the softened furrow yields,
The gathered sod-heap and the shallow seam;
To drive the cattle to the narrow stream,
To seek the ewes upon the furzy down,
As long as daylight's living splendours gleam,
And silvery moonbeams span'd the common brown,
Twined with the wayside arch and the green forest's crown.

And hymnings rose from every hedgerow fern,
And germ of ivy on the boulder's breast,
The falling waters by the rock-heap stern, [nest,
Where summer winds swept o'er the night-bird's
Mysterious chimes, that cannot be expressed,
The cadence of a solemn song to be,
Which filled his being with a holier zest
For what his eye could then but dimly see,
And hill and dale and down were but its magic key.

His nameless grave was made among the hills,
Where rows of miners in their white shrouds lay,
And rank grass battened 'neath the old church sills,
Which weirdly waved beneath the moon's pale
Not to be noticed now in garish day, [ray,
Lost mid the myriads that around him sleep;
And Monro knows not where to mark his clay,
Or plant a floweret on the hallowed heap,
Where Loneliness and Death their endless vigils keep.

And then the book was Monro's dear delight,
Which he sat reading in his heathy bower;
Some ancient poem gilt with Saxon light,
Strong as a tree, and sturdy as a tower.
The poet ploughman charmed him many an hour,
Till moonlight came, and all the glades were still,
And glinting starbeams twined the sleeping flower,
And laid their silver bars across the rill,
And Silence, with bent head, sat on the listening hill.

He met the Muse among the daisy-buds,
Brought by the March sun to his father's ground,
When the blue violet the low valley studs,
And catkins on the hazel boughs are found.
A reed she blew that gave a solemn sound,
Which filled his heart with such extatic joy,
That he could not resist the gladsome bound,
Like the gay child who grasps some precious toy.
She smiled with loving grace and gave it to the boy.

And now where'er he walked, on moor or mead,
Or by the naked crags he loved so well,
He bore with him his ever-precious reed,
And how he loved it none on earth can tell.
In lonely places much he loved to dwell,
Where Nature's living voice was only heard,
And far away the solemn village bell,
Whose pensive echoes the pale lily stirred,
Or gently smote the ear of homeward-wheeling bird.

His study was the shadow of a rock,
O'erhanging the meek moss and lowly thyme,
Or flowery hawthorn, where the fleecy flock
Cropped the green herbage in the day's full prime.
And here he drank from rippling rills of rhyme,
Which lulled his spirit into blissful rest,
Till o'er the tree tops rose the curfew's chime,
And the last wood-dove sought her sheltered nest,
And twilight lingered long in dalliance with the west.

In glens he wrote where fern and ivy grew,
And trailing brambles spread their prickly hands,
While overhead the glimmering swallows flew,
And larks sang lyrics in religious bands.
By lonely meres and mossy wells he stands,
With dreamy eyes which newest thoughts unseal,
A vision-seeker through enchanted lands,
Where pensive pilgrims in green garments kneel,
Beholding more than earth and distant heaven reveal.

It mattered not where Monro chanced to be,—
Driving the red horse in the home-made plough,
Tending the yearlings in the clover lea,
Or fetching fodder for the patient cow,
Skirting the crags which stud his mountain's brow,
Or school-ward creeping with his satchel green,—
His song-spray budded like a lonely bough,
Where only waste and wilderness is seen,
While here and there bright spots of herbage intervene.

When work was over, and the rake and hoe
Were resting in the corner of the shed,
To his retreat would musing Monro go,
And stretch himself upon some thymy bed,
While sweetly larks sang, air-hung, overhead,
And runnels in the hollows soothed his ear,
Playing his rustic reed till daylight fled,
And glow-worms in the dewy grass appear,
And murmurs fill the vales from some untrodden sphere.

How sweetly passed the dreamy hours of eve,
Beside some furze-brake on the mossy ground,
Where he his thoughts would into numbers weave,
Or read his volume as the birds hopped round!
He shunned the crowd, where'er that crowd was found,
And sought the paths by Meditation trod,
Where wild flowers worshipped by the moorland mound,
As seraph pinions swept the sedgy sod,
And through the grottoes rolled the august name of God.

And he was happier here where ivy trailed,
And leaves winked wonders to the western star,
Where gossamers along the dingles sailed,
And sheep-bells tinkled on his ear afar,
Than he who mingles in the world's great war,
Where sorrow sighs and weary wretches weep,
And crossing chords re-crossing echoes mar;
For song's own minions through the welkin sweep,
And trumpets fill the vales and thunder on the steep.

And he was but a boy with mystery fraught,
Led by the echoes of his native dell;
A boy whom Nature with her own voice taught,
And so he learnt to love her wondrous well;
A boy who longed among the larks to dwell,
Fluttering and warbling on their path of joy,
Hanging sweet love-notes on the floweret's bell,
And filling fancy with benign employ,
Where rose-crowned landscapes blazed. No! he was but a boy.

And when the dusk came slumbering o'er the meads,
Like rustic rhymer when his spade is still,
His prayer arose amid the silent reeds
In some worn channel of the lonely hill.
Unmissed, unwatched, he here would weep his fill,
Till light-streaks broke the firmament above,
And shafts of beauty fell upon the rill, [dove,
And wings swept round him like the homeward
And echoes spanned the heavens that our good God is love.

The wild birds sweeping o'er the solemn down,
Brought to his heart an exquisite delight,
Now towering high above the mountain's crown,
Now near at hand, now almost out of sight.
Their wings flash carols in the golden light,
And rills of music murmur through the air,
Following their upward and their onward flight;
And sweetest fen-harps gather swiftly there,
And palaces of psalm rise on the moorland bare.

Sometimes he stretched himself beneath the thorn,
And gazed far up into the deepening blue;
And, breaking o'er the hills, another morn
Of moral beauty met his raptured view.
Here plants of love and Christian kindness grew;
The rose of charity adorned the rills;
The dove of peace among the olives flew,
And bees hummed round the lowly daffodils,
And War was buried deep beneath the eternal hills.

Then he would shut his eyes and muse his joy;
And what he saw can never be unsealed,
While troops of hill-nymphs danced around the boy,
And chords that rang not on his senses pealed.
The dells of fancy were to him revealed,
Where shining beings plied their oars of gold,
And snowy birds around the headlands wheeled,
And trees hung blossoms which would ne'er grow old,
And storms of solemn verse among the mountains rolled.

The welcome ramble with his gleesome mates,
The great town's wonders praised by his compeers,
The evening story by the hamlet gates,
When softest moonlight floods the listening spheres,
Were left behind for musings with the meres,
For pathways by the feet of fairies prest,
For hill-side torrents tumbling on his ears,
For wind-blown epics on the boulder's crest;
And Joy walked with him here her happy flower-crowned guest.

And when the hush is deepest, and the moors
Stretch far away beneath the lofty sky,
Where quiet Evening folds her dusky doors,
And on the marsh is heard the heron's cry,
No human face, no habitation nigh,
Man, holding converse with his inner life,
Learns how to live, and better, how to die,
Where heaven's own murmurs are with mercy rife,
And God Himself draws near to still the storm of strife.

His joy-cup never brimmed more beautiful,
Or sparkled in the rosy tints of morn,
Than when he, in sweet evening's solemn lull,
Read his rude stanzas 'neath the flowery thorn.
Then his companions, blithe and peasant-born,
Would praise him as the marvel of his race; [torn,
While shreds of moonlight, from the white clouds
Through the broad arc each other slowly chase,
And notes that shake the reeds fill all the listening space.

At such a time the twigs with silver beads,
The bell-flowers hanging o'er the silent lake,
The quaint enclosures of his father's meads,
The tiniest leaflet of the tangled brake,
In his rapt ears a rhyming rustling make,
Like numbers trembling through the early hay,
Or murmurs which the sweeping plovers shake
In Autumn silence o'er the stretching brea,
Which man can never give, nor ever take away.

And when the March winds, swooping from afar,
In headlong havoc plunged across the land,
When sod-heaps smouldered 'neath the evening star,
Raked into hillocks by the willing hand,
How sweet to all the youthful, jocund band,
Roasted potatoes from the embers red,
Which glittered in the dust like mineral sand!
Beneath the hedgerows they delighted fed,
As pleased as if their lunch were richest beef and bread.

E'en now when musing by his dying fire,
With changing visions in the flickering flame,
Their ringing voices seem to echo nigher,
And tongues long silent call upon his name:
The misty vales return the rich acclaim,
While hazy heights resound with olden lays,
Which well the tillers of the ground became,
In those unclouded, verse-inspiring days,
When every note was high with Nature's ceaseless praise.

How fresh these heights, so near the door of love,
So near the gateway which the prophets passed,
With the far-stretching firmament above,
In summer blueness, or with clouds o'ercast,
Grotesquely tumbled by the northern blast!
The breeze seems blowing now upon his hair,
O'er beds of thyme and slopes of heather vast,
Though sitting far off in his friendly chair,
With banks piled up between of fifty years of care.

Yes, wafts of odour visit him again,
From blossomed furze and beds of camomile,
From dewy violets resting on the plain,
And hermit hawthorn by the country stile.
O, blow upon him yet a little while,
Before his sandals are required no more,
And he is resting on the flowery isle,
Where heaven's own life-trees line the emerald shore,
Nor anguish lifts its voice, nor weakness sighs no more!

Hail Gentleness! how beautiful thou art!
Man shouts to man upon the noisy plain,
And tongues run riot in the busy mart,
Like mountain-channels after sudden rain.
O, let me seek thee in the village lane,
Where some meek pilgrim rests upon his rod,
Whose softened utterance may my steps enchain,
Where children play, and Nature's wildings nod,
Whilst he relates his trust in the eternal God.

If man were gentle to his fellow-man,
Returning love for wickedness and wrong,
Not railing, though the railer hurled his ban
Like some fierce tempest, stunning, stern, and strong,
How soon the gems of hope would round him throng!
How soon the flowers of Paradise appear,
And earth roll round in one eternal song,
Whose healing echoes ever grew more clear,
And rang with heavenly praise from gladsome year to year!

O, hasten it, Thou lowly Nazarine,
On whom the storm of wrath came fiercely down,
Who drank the sorrows of this earthly scene,
That man might reach the city of renown,
And from the King receive a fadeless crown,
Because Thy temples were with gore bedyed,
And Thou didst hang, amid the scoffer's frown,
On the rough cross, while cruel men deride,
And blood and water gushed from Thy spear-opened side.

The startled sun grew dark at fervid noon,
The great hills rocked like boulders in their bed,
The cattle lowed to be called home too soon,
And thunder spoke to thunder overhead.
Sheeted and pale, up rose the buried dead; [whine;
Rocks crashed, and voices through the valleys
The temple's veil was rent like slender thread,
And those who in the Saviour's death combine
Confessed with burning lips He was the King Divine.

And through the universe an echo rolled,
Re-echoing still when stars are on the deep,
Or the sun shines in all his wealth of gold
On the green pastures, or the barren steep;
In isles remote where palms in silence sleep,
And waters wash the yet untrodden shore,
Where torrents tumble to the wild bird's sweep,—
"'Tis finished! He sin's ruin doth restore,
And to believing man opes wide heaven's golden door."

ARGUMENT OF BOOK SECOND.

Monro's Books—Small Leisure—True-born Poet's Preceptors —Hay Scythes—The Cuckoo—April Yearnings—Divine Gifts —Wren's Nest — Water Wagtail — Highest Teaching — The Robin—Laurel Leaves —True Melody —The Great Storm— Lightning—Thunder—Voice of the Eternal—Early Budding— Spring — Summer — Autumn— Winter — Log Light — Hedge Treasures—The Lowlands—The Hawthorn—Stars—Constellations—Jesse's Rod —The Ship—The Mine—Shafts—Ladders —Levels—The Fire Cloud—Heavy Darkness — Release — The Vision —The Oak — The Workman Prince — Hissing Fuse— The Fatal Spark — Exploding Hole — The Power of God — The True Hero—Mill Wheel —Tinder — Brimstone Match — Shadowy Form—Wild Duck—Love—Church Bells—The Aged Sires—The Watcher—The Mother—The Prayer—Thrushes— Children—Sunset—Acorn Cups — Instruction — The Vision— Life's Blessedness—Scripture Precepts—The Thatcher — Peeps from the Pane— Sunny Faces — The Kiss at the Door — The Winnower—The Sleeper—The Seed Cake—The Old Chair— Bar Curtains—Mother and Child—The Rapids — Holidays— Valley Trumpeters — Pearls — Rhyme Threads — Learning's Torch — Thought Work — Noisy Nothings — The Future — Precious Loan—Two Travellers—The Reader — The Cellar — The Neglector— Crowned Effort—The Last Trump—Charity— The Quest—Favoured Spots—Wounded Hare.

MONRO.

BOOK SECOND.

AND Monro's books were few,
his leisure small,
His clothing coarse, his morsels somewhat hard;
And yet no murmur from his lips would fall,
Nor did he deem his destiny ill-starred.
No gusts of grumbling his fresh feelings marred,
No teacher taught him on his native moor:
For it is vain to guide the true-born bard,
Whose sure preceptors are the rude hill's store,
And valleys rich with flowers where tumbling waters roar.

And how he loved the quiet of the groves,
And lanes and fields, no language can express,
Old ivied ruins, rocks, and dim alcoves,
And even the rain-beat shaggy wilderness,
Where Nature wore her coarsest, quaintest dress,
And Meditation mused beneath the moon.
Here he forgot his labour and distress,
Be it November, or fresh emerald June
When hay-scythes sweep the meads to cuckoo's joyous tune.

With yearning heart he longed for April's chime,
The vernal sunshine by the hedgerows green,
Where he might write his bud-imparted rhyme,
Neath sheltered bush, or thymy bank unseen;
Pacing the ditches with mysterious mien,
Entwined with sun-threads from the higher sphere,
And spirit-stirred with sights and sounds terrene,
Which ever charmed his senses far and near,
Replete with gifts Divine, which daily grew more dear.

The wren's nest built 'neath some o'erhanging bank,
The linnet's eggs among the shady leaves,
The water wagtail by the sedges dank,
The sparrow-birdlings near the reedy eaves,
The partridge hiding mid the harvest sheaves,
The starlings streaming down the solemn glen,
The startled snipe as it the ether cleaves,
Had higher teachings, in the field and fen,
Than books could ever yield, or tongues of wisest men.

The holy silence of the universe
Was more to him than gathering hosts of men,
Than clothes, or food, or volume of sweet verse
Inscribed of old by some immortal pen.
He knew the first flower smiling in the glen,
The hawthorn where the robin built its nest,
The summer rush-tufts waving in the fen,
The rabbit's burrow where the great rocks rest,
And Poetry rears her bower, and he was truly blest.

Nature to him was like a mother kind,
Though men the muser would too much neglect;
She wooed him to her palace, lichen-lined,
With laurel-leaves and berries bright bedecked;
And here her voice came to his soul direct,
In bubbling water, and low-whispering reed,
Which did his heart with melody affect,
Like those who ofttimes for their Master plead
When heavenly dews descend to cheer the Gospel seed.

And Monro loved the anger of the storm,
As o'er the hills in waves of wrath it came:
Then on some lonely crag was seen his form,
As well a wooer of the Muse became.
With lifted hands he shouts the tempest's name,
And hears the blasts of trumpets all around,
And high psalms fragrant with the breath of fame,
Like armies marching to the bugle's sound:
And heaven came near him then, and earth was holy ground.

She taught him in the thunder of the cloud,
That crashed in awful grandeur overhead,
When the far upper hemisphere seemed bowed
And racked and rended with a blazing dread.
Then he stood silent, ever fancy-fed,
Hearing the hosts of Michael far away,
And seas of music rolling o'er their bed,
Where rocks rose crested with eternal spray,
And nymphs in weeds of song among the billows lay.

And with the lightnings he held converse oft,
Hissing and streaming on their frantic way;
And when a fiercer flame-shaft lit the croft,
His eyes would sparkle with a wilder ray;
And he would mingle in the furious fray
That rent the reefs, and scathed the mossy sod,
Turning the darkness into sudden day,
Hanging a glory on each crested clod,
Hearing in every roll the awful name of God.

With virgin Spring he travelled arm in arm,
Watching her trickery with the buds and flowers,
A conquered captive by her magic charm,
Her gentle breezes and her vernal showers,
When larks sang sweetly over violet bowers,
And linnets twittered on the sprouting tree;
To Monro these were more delightful hours
Than any others in the year could be,
And in a fresher strain his simple songs sang he.

He loved the Summer for her robe of green,
Her wayside gems, and leafy forests grand,
Her wealth of roses in the noon's full sheen,
When bursts of gladness travel o'er the land;
And Autumn, with the dry leaves in his hand
O'erwritten with the stanzas of the wood,
When the rich grapes, by amorous zephyrs fanned,
Hang by the porch, and cluster near the flood,
Speaking in wisdom's ear that God to all is good.

And Old Man Winter had his charms as well,
The fairy frost-work glittering on the pane,
The snow-flakes falling in the hollow dell,
Or ranked in drifts upon the open plain,
The plover's cry, the robin's liquid strain,
When sunlight gleamed, beside his cottage door,
The cowboy's whistle in the sheltered lane,
Or the warm log-light falling on the floor,
All these illumed his thought and added to his store.

The time of early budding was his choice,
When Nature roused herself from winter's sleep,
And through the woodlands rang a gladsome voice,
And golden sunbeams glittered on the steep.
The opening blossoms caused his heart to leap,
And the first primrose by the watching meres,
Like a fond mother long time led to weep
For a lost child throughout the lagging years,
Returning swiftly home to wipe away her tears.

So he grew rich in what the hedges yield, [wold,
Stern crofts and carnes and thyme-banks on the
The silver streamlet gliding through the field,
The stone-crop clinging to the ruin old,
The gorse-ridge waving in a sea of gold,
Where wrens held concert all the summer long,
And grasshoppers their shrillest pleasures told,
The fairy fern-fronds and wild flowers among,
His treasures simple thoughts and pearls of pastoral song.

No power could lure him from his musing haunt,
Not e'en the game of foot-ball on the green,
The town of marbles, or the bright boy's vaunt
Of what within the market might be seen.
No sight to him was like the living green
Which on the lowlands and dim heights appears,
And where the flowery hawthorns hedgeward lean,
And furze-boughs spread abroad their polished spears.
Thus psalm-ward Monro walked throughout his opening years.

The stars of heaven were dear as human eyes
That sparkle by the glowing hearth at eve.
How would he haste to watch the moon arise,
When healthful mowers the green meadows leave,
And darting bats the silent welkin cleave!
The constellations were the bards of God,
Mantled in love, where glad hearts cease to grieve,
And trees of Paradise adorn the sod,
And golden lutes surround the Stem of Jesse's Rod.

Thus Monro walked delighted with the world,
Ere care had placed his hand upon his brow,
Like a trim ship with snowy sails unfurled,
Hope at the helm and music at the prow;

For ever ready freely to avow
That song to him was more than silver bright,
Houses or lands, as he confesses now,
Advancing slowly in the evening light,
With other lands in view, and other towers in sight.

Then came the darkness of the dangerous mine,
His daily, nightly tasks of tedious toil,
Where never star, or moon, or sunbeams shine,
But sulphur-wreaths around the caverns coil,
Which health, and strength, and mental might dis-
Giving the feet of time a tardy pace, [poil,
Through heated hollows and rude rifts to moil,
When boyhood's blossoms opened on his face,
And greenness clothed the tree which gave his being grace.

And what he saw, and what he suffered there,
By day and night, can never be expressed,
Where sulphur-furies thronged the sickly air,
And Danger burrowed in the blackest vest,
Mid rocks which rent to aid his mineral-quest,
Exploding holes, and shafts as dark as doom,
Where hollow echoes sink into the breast,
And solemn breathings hurry through the gloom,
Like those which wizards say are murmuring from the tomb.

Sometimes his arms were heavy with his task,
So that 'twas hard to lift them to his head,
His face like one who wore a dismal mask,
Of black, or white, or yellow, brown, or red.
Exhausted oft, he made the flints his bed,
And dreamt of groves of olives far away,
By dews divine and gales of gladness fed,
Where sunlight glitters all the livelong day,
And harpers mid the trees and falling waters play.

The heat, the cold, the sulphur and the slime,
The grinding masses of the loosened rock,
The scaling ladders, the incessant grime
From the dank timbers and the dripping block,
The lassitude, the mallet's frequent knock,
The pain of thirst when water was so near,
The aching joints, the blasted hole's rude shock,
Could not dash out the music from his ear,
Or stay the sound of song which ever murmured clear.

The cavern's sides, the vagues of shining spar,
The roof of rock where scarce the candle gleams,
The hollow levels strangely stretching far
Beneath the mountains, full of mineral seams,
Were evermore to him befitting themes,
For meditation and his rustic lay;
While in the darkness his pale visage gleams,
To read rich sonnets on the furrowed clay,
And craggy slabs that jut the ladder's lonely way.

Thus month by month, and tedious year by year,
This heavy mining darkness closed him round,
So far away from all he held most dear,
The rocky hillside and the lower ground, [round,
Where the dear wild flowers blushed so sweetly
And taught him more than books, or learned men,
And all their creeds and axioms profound,
Although propounded by the page or pen;
A higher voice he heard in every glade and glen.

He wrote his verses 'neath the fire-cloud's wing,
Beside some slab of mineral in the cave,
And where the shaft yawned widest would he sing,
Content with what his dangerous calling gave.
He knew that grumbling suited not the brave,
And so he raised aloft his ponderous sledge;
At every blow he chimed some ringing stave,
And wiped his forehead on his flannel's edge,
Or pencilled down his psalm upon the iron wedge.

It was enough to daunt the stoutest heart,
The lengthened ladders morn and eve to climb;
But Monro shrank not from the bitter part
He knew was his, though panting in his prime.
There rose within his soul a heavenly chime,
Which roughest, rudest work could not destroy,
A softening sound, an elevating rhyme,
No bleak surroundings rarely might annoy;
And then when green fields came, O what delicious joy!

Oft would he stand upon some splintered spar
Surcharged with wonder, gazing in the gloom;
And weird eyes seemed to watch him from afar,
And bending bipeds through the blackness loom.
Strange that a single flower of song should bloom
Where Death lay lurking by the flinty mass,
As if but just returning from the tomb,
Where armies slept in some unnamed morass,
With sharpened scythe in hand, to mow men down like grass.

But by his side, where Darkness sat unveiled
In awful silence on a throne of smoke,
And Fear among the falling fragments wailed,
The Nymph of Song the sombre sadness broke,
Loosening the links of Labour's iron yoke,
And leading him o'er hills and breezy dells,
Where maidens clustered underneath the oak,
And fairies gamboled in minutest cells,
And bay-crowned poets sang beside the bubbling wells.

And Monro heard of one, when life was young,
And Hope was wandering mid the ferns and flowers,
When blossoms on the hanging boughs were strung,
And Zephyrus dallied with the rosy Hours,
A workman prince, a king where blackness lowers,
A noble in a suit of flannel clad,
Whose soul beyond earth's selfish valley towers,
Where holy sunlight makes the spirit glad,
And Michael Verran was the Cornish name he had.

Behold this miner in the early morn,
To whom the cross of Christ was sweetly dear,
Leaving his reedy cottage by the thorn,
To blast the rock in the deep working drear,
Who, when the fuse was hissing in his ear,
Gave up his life to save his comrade's own,
And in the shaft-shade, without dread or fear,
Sat like a statue on the flinty stone,
To be destroyed by fire and into fragments blown.

Nearer and nearer drew the fatal spark;
And then the hole exploded with a roar,
As when the lightnings leave their fiery ark,
And thunder rolls along the rocky shore.
His mine-mates never thought to see him more;
But when the rubbish had been cleared away,
Which fell beside the Christian man, and o'er,
They saw how God the flaming mass did stay,
And light on his calm brow shone like the rising day.

They drew him forth, a monument of grace,
With shouts to Him who rules the angel-choir:
No scratch or stain was on his manly face,
Nor o'er his raiment e'en the smell of fire.
Their hearty bursts of praises thundered higher,
As God came down into the cavern's gloom,
And heaven's eternal gateways glittered nigher.
Now on his grave the darling daisies bloom,
And Truth in snowy robes sits on the hero's tomb.

Yes, HERO, though he never wore a sword,
Or armed himself with the destroyer's dower,
Bringing distress to home's delightful board,
And woe and wailing to the household bower.
His name shall blazon down the tyrant's power,
Who madly stirs the hissing flames of strife,
And joys to hurl abroad the fiery shower,
With pain and plague and pale-eyed famine rife;
For Verran gave his own to save another's life.

Ere autumn dawn-rays kissed the old mill-wheel,
The eyes of Monro oped beneath the thatch,
To see his father oft with flint and steel,
Blow at the tinder for the brimstone match,
Before the sparrow perched upon the hatch,
Or robin picked the bread-crumbs from the door;
To eat his warm milk with a quick dispatch,
Whilst the short candle flared upon the floor,
Then mine-wards with content to dig the hidden ore.

His shadowy form rose oft before his eyes,
As he sat blowing at the kindling rag,
In the cold glimmer of the wintry skies,
Before the sun had climbed the higher crag,
Or wild duck left the sheltering water-flag;
Then out of bed to dress, though half-asleep,
And off to work with pasty in his bag,
Not grieving that his lot small ease should reap,
But whistling to the winds that rolled across the steep.

Thus passed his teens, thus passed his riper years,
Until Love met him on the April plains,
Where she sat sighing in a shower of tears,
While primrose-clusters whispered in the lanes,
And gentle songsters chimed their sweet refrains
By old farm-gate on budding bush and fence.
His love, perhaps, was like all other swains,
Although, I ween, a little more intense,
Holy, unselfish, deep, angelic-like, immense.

No church-bells rang upon his wedding-day,
No white-robed bridesmaids by the altar stand,
No village gossips throng the public way,
No branches wave, no lifting of the hand;
But quiet as a footfall on the sand.
Two aged sires were all that gathered there,
The loving fathers of a different band,
Called hence long since to breathe a purer air,
Where Heaven uplifts her towers and all is passing fair.

His mother watched him leave the old home door,
And pass away on that eventful morn;
Her eyes were on him till he crossed the moor,
And turned the corner by the aged thorn;
And then her tender heart was somewhat torn,
For he could see her tears would scarcely stay;
For she was parting with her loved first-born:
And Monro, too, brushed many drops away,
As oft he turned to look, even as he does to-day.

May kind Heaven fill that mother's heart with peace,
And shower His blessings on her aged head,
Till home is reached, and life's long travels cease,
And doubt is o'er, and sin and sorrow fled!
O, bless her by the river's shingly bed,
Which flows in crystal clearness near the gate,
By meadow rills and mountain brooklets fed,
Where wren chirps loudly for his missing mate,
And thrushes sweetly sing till eve is getting late.

And Monro never heard her lips complain,
Or utter grievous words, or murmur aught.
In days of dearth, in hours of grief and pain,
A higher Power her spirit humbly sought.
She sued His love by whom her all was bought:
Nor prayed she for her patient self alone,
Her numerous offspring to the Lord she brought;
And answered He that supplicating tone,
And called them by His grace, and made them all
His own.

Then children came, like flowers, to gem his shed,
Filling his being with a fuller joy;
In fragrant clusters round his hearth they spread,
Whose healing odours care could not destroy,
Nor all the rigour of his rough employ:
He ran to meet them when his work was o'er,
And kissed his girl, and danced his laughing boy,
And gladly shared with them his simple store,
Forgetting his hard toil, and felt he was not poor.

His rhymes he wrote while they were on his knees,
Or in the cradle sleeping by his side;
Walking abroad among the silent trees,
Or on the mosses of the moorland wide.
They sat with him the tinkling rill beside,
To watch the sun set o'er the bouldered steep,
And flush the brakes, and tinge the tossing tide,
Till mystic murmurs through the dingles sweep,
And from green acorn-cups the shining fairies peep.

He taught them how the winds on chariots rode,
To do the bidding of the awful King;
He led them forth to Music's green abode,
Where dripping waters to the willows sing;
He bade them mark the lightning's livid wing,
Nor fear the thunder as it rolled along
Through the low valleys with an awful ring,
Sudden, sublime, stupendous, startling, strong,
And over all he flung the magic spell of song.

They rose before him in the gloomy shaft,
Gleaming like angels in his fancy's eye;
And though the dregs of weariness he quaffed,
How would he haste to meet them by-and-by!
O, had he wings, how fleetly would he fly,
With open arms, to greet them with a kiss,
And toss them to the ceiling with a cry
Of tenderest love, which monarchs often miss,
And feel his soul drank then more than a prince's bliss.

With them would he life's blessedness partake,
No matter what the providence might be;
The luscious berries gathered from the brake,
The ruddy apple from the orchard tree,
The sweet root-treasures of the fruitful lea,
The shred of meat which sometimes was his share,
Not always of superlative degree,
But relished surely more than fowl or hare
In palaces of pride where robes of crimson flare.

His good wife sat like Dorcas with her shears,
And loved her own home better than the best;
She bade her children dry their starting tears,
And brightly look, and kept them neatly dressed;
Instilled pure Christian precepts in their breast,
To love their neighbour and their father's friend,
And evermore to make fair Truth their guest,
And let their prayers at morn and eve ascend,
And God would be their guide and save them to the end.

When Eve came musing like a weary hind,
And thatcher whistled down the narrow lane,
And he had left his mineral-cave behind,
And with tired footsteps homeward walked again,
What pleasure 'twas to see them at the pane,
With lifted hands, and faces sunned all o'er,
Waiting to feel a father's loving strain,
And kiss him welcomes even at the door,
And dance their loving joys upon the white clay floor!

But they are scattered now, like husks of corn
When the stout peasant winnows on the mead,
Feeling upon his brow the breath of morn,
As the bright sunlight glitters on the seed.
One o'er the waters sailed with summer speed;
And one is sleeping by the village spire,
Where the slow bells are often heard to plead
With erring man, when Sabbath songs inspire;
And Monro now is old, and bending o'er his lyre.

The happiest man in all the round of life,
Is he who labours for his daily bread,
With honest hands supporting child and wife,
Whether he earns it in the shaft or shed,
On sea or land, by chisel, plough, or thread.
He eats his meal with blessedness untold,
And thanks his Maker with uncovered head,
The loving shepherd of a grateful fold,
Which emperors seldom earn with all their weight of gold.

At supper-time, when sitting round the board,
His joy was greater than the spear has won;
The jug of milk, the seed-cake from the hoard,
And now, perchance, the pie or currant-bun.
The sands of life would then more sweetly run;
And by his side the paper-scrap was seen,
Whereon his rustic rhymes were often spun,
Whene'er a new thought cheered his pensive mien,
Of Muses mid the springs, or lovers on the green.

Backward and forward to his darksome den,
With weary feet he walked the tedious years,
All uncomplaining mid his fellow-men,
Who heeded not his sonnets or his tears,
The notes of music ever in his ears;
He sang because the sounds he could not stay,
Like evening whispers from the starry spheres,
Turning his darkness into softened day,
Blunting the ills of life, and thrusting gloom away.

His own old chair of brown unpolished elm,
Drew him more strongly than the landlord's seat,
Where rose-buds nodded in Love's flowery realm,
And music murmured from the tiniest feet.
He passed the drink-door in the cold and heat,
Drawn homewards by the sunshine of his shed,
Where pure affection kept the household neat,
Leaving no longing for bar-curtains red,
Where liquors launch their shafts till reason's self is fled.

The labouring man who loves the tavern's glare,
Beyond the comforts of his own fireside,
Drinking in vain to deaden worldly care,
Already rolls in ruin's hungry tide,
Whose wailing waters over millions ride,
Gone down to darkness in the horrid deep,—
The grey-haired sire, the newly-wedded bride,
Mother and child, the shepherd with his sheep,
Over the rapids swept where foam-clad Furies leap.

And Monro's holidays were spent with streams,
With trumpeters that trod the rushy dells,
With shallow dingles where pure water gleams,
And curious creatures peer from sedgy cells;
With books that led him to immortal wells,
Where pearls lay shining on the mystic floor,
And sweet notes issue from a thousand shells,
Which murmur not amid the great world's roar,
Without a single sigh to cross the alehouse door.

If he had passed his leisure with his pipe,
Lounging at corners till the sun was set,
And the young moon was like a silvery stripe,
Tinging the sleeping flowers, with dew-beads wet,
Or drank his potions 'neath the landlord's jet,
No rhyme-threads would be woven by his hand,
No minstrel-murmurs haunt the rivulet,
No step be taken from the lower sand,
Where learning's torch is dim, nor lights the lonely land.

With thought-work weary, he half-longed sometimes
To be like his supine compeers around,
Who loved their laughter better than sweet rhymes,
And noisy nothings than the minstrel's sound;
Who spent their leisure on amusement's ground,
And scarcely wished to rise above the brute,
Which on the hills, or in the fields is found,
To future good, or life's grand problems mute,
More pleased with Judy's drum than Shakespere's silver lute.

But what he held the King of Love had given,
And he could not imbed it in the clay,
Or hurl it o'er the heights with horror riven,
To sleep in silence till the judgment day:
This were a sin, whatever men might say,
Or scoffers hum, or infidels malign.
And so he heard an inner voice alway,
Which he obeyed, not daring to repine,
Believing it God-lent, soul-lifting and divine.

Hope never left him, though his aching limbs
Were hanging almost like a broken bow;
But day by day he chimed his cheerful hymns
To the pick's echo, or the river's flow:
Till from a neighbouring town, long years ago,
Two travellers came, within the twilight still,
With faces kind, and language strong and slow,
And told him he must leave the mining drill,
And higher, holier work for Jesus Christ fulfil.

Then he became a Reader of the Book,
Whose every line is gilt with heavenly love,
Which tells how He our sinful nature took,
To freely raise our ransomed souls above.
And prayed he for the meekness of the dove,
And the Good Spirit's renovating power,
That He his feeble efforts would approve,
And guide his erring footsteps hour by hour,
And on His precious seed the dews of mercy shower.

In hollow attics near the rended roof,
In cellars grim, as sea-waves washed the walls,
In squalid places where peace stood aloof,
And day and night beheld intemperate brawls,
In chambers where the obscene insect crawls,
And lewdness burrows in a broken bed,
On wandering wights in gentle tones he calls,
With pitying pleadings for the poor misled,
And from the Holy Book the words of life he read.

Some shut their ears and hugged their long delay,
As if the pearls of God were coarsest stones,
Content to dabble in the worthless clay,
Which brings distress and pain and endless moans.
A few sought Him whose blood for sin atones,
And were by living faith renewed, re-clad.
This cheered his spirit, and His power he owns
Who giveth comfort when the heart is sad,
And corn-sheaves on the hills, and makes the desert glad.

The weakest effort humbly done for Him,
Shall not be lost amid the whirling spheres;
His word shall prosper, though the light be dim,
And they shall reap who sow the truth in tears.
A word, a look, a smile to comfort fears,
Shall win reward when suns have passed away,
And the last trump shall sound the knell of years,
Whose dreadful echoes the broad islands sway,
And the great Book be oped in the full blaze of day.

O Charity! all loveliness thou art,
Nursed by the peasant or the palaced peer,
Thinking no evil of the pointed dart,
Suffering so long the anguish and the tear!
Come, let me seek thee as I journey here,
Dwelling in all humility and love,
Rejoicing ever in the truth sincere,
With features milder than the gentle dove,
Beseeching men to pray and turn their eyes above.

Some spots of earth are thy especial bower,
Where riot rolls not on the midnight air,
Where smile the daisy and the passion-flower,
And malice scarcely finds a footing there.
O, let me reach it, though the plain be bare,
Struck with fierce winds that tumble o'er the scrag,
All lonely lying as a wounded hare,
Or water-bird among the murmuring flag,
Where angels track thy steps from shining crag to crag.

ARGUMENT OF BOOK THIRD.

Autumn Leaves—Leaving Home—Warwick—Stratford-on-Avon—Mower's Whistle — The Echoing Name — Shakespere's House—The Pencilled Chamber—Shottery—The Well — Anne Hathaway—The Friend of Worth—The Tomb in the Chancel —Murmuring Voices—The Avon— Shakespere's Dust — The Greatest Wonder — A Joy for Ever — Highest Instruments— The Lost Restored—Evening Vision—The Farewell — Home— Loving Faces—Fireside Sweets—The Harp Unhung—The Great Sea—The Isle of Gold—Sabbath Rest—Book Making—Duties Fulfilled—Baby's Chair — Important Issues — Perseverance— Varied Themes—The Meed of Virtue — The Rich Harvest— Peace and Truth—Eliciting Homage— Worth in the Cottage— Resolution—Weakness and Age—Unshaken Confidence—Harvest Moonlight — Heaps of Wreckage — The Edge of the Desert— The Powerful Hand — Restless Spirit — Godly Sorrow — Heavenly Guest—Do your Little—The Last of the Household —Immature Earnestness—Holy Ardour — Mammon's Walk— Cunning Craftsmen— Contented Labour—Best Guidance—Call for Succour—Resignation— Greater Light—Roof Tree — Hills of Home—The Last Echo — Love for Silence — The Closet— Sweetest Song — Bird of the Poet — Hawthorn Lane — Life's Trials—All is Well — The Better Home — The Appeal — Adverse Gales—God Knoweth—Grey Hairs — Loving Nature —Boys at Play—Children's Voices—Happy Symbol—Pleasant Picture—Sincere Thanksgiving—Loftiest Labour—Man's Heritage—The Maker's Claim—Love of Country—Supplication— Adieu.

MONRO.

BOOK THIRD.

WAS late in Autumn, as the leaves fall fast,
And Monro then was forty years of age,
When he the limits of Cornwallia past,
The yearnings of his spirit to assuage,
To read another living landscape page;
For he had never crossed its bounds before,
Since first an actor on life's little stage,
A few yards from his mother's humble door,
Where boulders watch the glens upon the lengthening moor.

And with the eagerness of one whose years
Have half been spent among a stranger clan,
Far from his early home and young compeers,
Where he in boyhood's dreamy wonder ran,
Revolving schemes to perfect when a man,
Returning home his absent friends to meet,
And their dear faces once again to scan,
And old familiar primrose-plots to greet,
So he to Warwick turned his anxious pilgrim feet.

And how he felt when Stratford's grassy glades,
And emerald meadows, burst upon his sight,
Where wicked elves still revel in the shades,
And throng the flower-bells all the summer night,
Trooping to covert when the sun brings light,
And mower whistles on the sloping mead,
Is not for faltering pen of mine to write;
It should be echoed with a stronger reed,
In notes unheard before. O, he was blest indeed!

One name was rolled upon his listening ear
From every object that before him lay;
The lower and the higher hemisphere
Re-echoed it on that auspicious day.
It hung in music on the smallest spray,
Clung to the hedgerows as he lingered by,
Spoke in the trees, and whispered from the clay,
And trembled sweetly in the willow's sigh;
And SHAKESPERE walked alone across the boundless sky.

The house he entered where the babe was born,
Whose name all nations now with joy revere;
His feet trod softly where the floor was worn,
And Shakespere's mother brushed away the tear.
The chamber where so many names appear
On wall and ceiling, smote him like a song
Of rushing waters when the heavens are clear,
And rising larks are singing all day long,
And Music walks the woods and soars the mountain strong.

Where Shottery mused among the silent meads,
He quaffed the nectar of its wondrous spell,
And heard the music of the rustling reeds,
And felt the magic of the narrow well:
And what a tale the ancient screen could tell,
If it would only exercise a voice!
And the small window where the thatch-eaves swell,
Where Anne oft waited for her maiden choice!
And when he whistling came, how would her heart rejoice!

Then Monro stood above the greatest grave
That ever human dust was known to fill;
The friend of worth, the spoiler of the knave,
The magic wielder of the mightiest quill,
Who read the human heart with royal skill,
And from the fields of fancy called a train
Of passing pageants, subject to his will,
The good, the brave, the vicious and the vain,
Which no man did before, nor may create again.

His feelings in the chancel were too high
For any finite language to repeat,
While the clear Avon murmured softly by,
And Shakespere's dust was lying at his feet.
He sat in silence, as it was most meet,
While through the dim aisles solemn whispers ran,
And murmuring voices murmuring voices meet,
And tingling chords the far-off ceiling span,
A chorus of renown to England's greatest man.

Where'er he gazed, whatever scene he saw,
The earth, the sky, the river's shining face,
The ancient house-roofs, bending as in awe,
Looking as if they longed to leave their place,
The wild flowers smiling with religious grace,
The dingle-bends where gossamers entwine,
And music-shafts that strangely shoot through space,
With all fair things that in the green reeds shine,
Held Shakespere's name aloft, whose mission was Divine.

Nor can he ever hope to feel again
Such spells of wonder as o'ercame him then,
Which are not wakened by the stretching plain,
The mighty mountain, or the gorge-pierced glen,
Nor all the mysteries of the monstrous fen,
Or flowers that blaze upon the lap of May,
Or rhetoric's flash, or the fierce shock of men,
Which daily roars in life's eventful fray,
As Sorrow ploughs his seams and tears are wiped away.

Like the sweet scenery of some pleasant dream,
When gentle sleep is resting on the frame,
Where the white lilies in rich clusters gleam,
And fruits for which the earth has not a name,

The house of quaintness whence great Shakespere came,
The maiden's mansion by the twisted road,
The tomb immortal, watched by endless Fame,
And the green dingles where his full thoughts flowed,
Shall ever cheer his heart along the homeward road.

The winds that swept across the glassy tide,
To Monro's ears were full of tingling sound,
Which seemed to higher instruments allied,
Unheard before on any earthly ground;
Which caused again his gladdened heart to bound,
Like one who kissed the cheek of a dear child
He long ago had deemed was dead and drowned,
Where foreign reefs were savagely up-piled,
And the tempestuous joy had well-nigh made him wild.

When Monro slowly turned at last to go,
The sun was sinking in the flaming west,
And mid the purple clouds that floated slow
Walked William Shakespere in a crimson vest.
How bright the roses shining on his breast,
And his fair forehead with a circlet bound,
Of glittering gems the choicest and the best!
And he was followed by the god of Sound,
Who blew a golden trump and scattered music round.

He leant upon his hand and sighed farewell,
And felt the warm tears coursing down his face,
Then turned to listen to the slow church-bell,
And turned again, so loth to leave the place.
Away, away with loitering, lingering pace,
With many a backward glance on scenes so dear,
Which never more, in life's declining race,
Could grateful Monro hope to witness here,
When so much change is wed to every passing year.

Again he turned, again his eyes were wet,
Again his inmost spirit breathed, "Good-bye!"
Again he whispered to the winds, "Not yet!"
And dashed the hot tears from his feverish eye.
Again he paused, again he heaved a sigh,
Again he listened to the solemn swell,
Again his face was lifted to the sky,
Again away, away, where none can tell,
And then to Stratford's shades his lingering, last farewell!

Home, home again, with loving faces round,
And scenes more dear than any other clime,
His hearth to him was ever classic ground,
So thickly scattered with the gems of time,
Where roses ripened in their richest prime,
And lilies shed their fragrance on the breeze,
And shining tendrils round the portals climb,
Where voices hum like honey-laden bees,
And clustering grapes hang down from light-encircled trees.

Then from the willow he his harp unhung,
And touched its strings beside the great sea-shore,
As the white spray in shining sheets was flung
The solid rocks and shifting shingle o'er.
And how he loved its wild and wondrous roar,
In storm or calm, when lightnings lashed the deep,
Or floating atoms crossed the yellow moor,
Or wind-god wailed upon the woeful steep!
The sea, the sea how grand! He heard it in his sleep.

And when the sunlight from the isle of gold
Streamed on the beauty of the Sabbath morn,
How loved he, wandering by some ruin old,
To hear the bells peal o'er the waving corn;
While, hidden in the flower-clumps of the thorn,
The blackbird warbled forth his hymn of praise,
And breezes, by the gentle south queen borne,
Shook from their wings sweet showers of silvery lays,
And Labour stood in awe before the day of days.

For one long week within the cavern's shade,
Where sea nor sun nor wandering brooklets be,
Was he not like a bird whose bar blockade
Was quickly oped to set the captive free?
What streaming thanks arose from bush and tree,
Where green twigs tremble, and dear flowerets nod!
And every daisy had its homily,
Which sweetly smiles upon the Sabbath sod,
And all created things poured forth their thanks to God.

His simple psalms were gathered in a book,
Which found its way into the homes of men,
In cots where bacon hangs upon the hook,
And bowers where beauty wields the daintiest pen.
Some gave it words of benediction then,
Some put it by until another day,
Some said they hoped it was not like a fen
Where the untutored might be led astray;
But chiefly words of cheer rejoiced him on his way.

No duty left he for the love of song,
From boyhood's brightness down to hoary hair,
Whether he tossed the clover with the prong,
Or wrote his verses by the baby's chair;
Nought was neglected for the rhymster's ware.
He plied his life-task with a cheerful face,
Taking odd moments as the Muse's share,
Which flashed like diamonds on his earnest race,
Too fraught with issues high to squander in the chase.

So he sang on where Silence watched the waves
On some high crag upon the lonely strand,
Where the great billows rushed into the caves,
And then fell back upon the shining sand.
His paper-scrap was ever near at hand,
Beside the fire, or where the streets are grim,
Or roaming rhyme-led o'er the meadow land,
When Evening sat among the dingles dim:
All seasons served his muse, all places were for him.

His themes were varied as the April hues,
When Spring is out a-budding in the lanes:
He wrote of roses dank with summer dews,
And lowland brooklets swelled with vernal rains;
Of cots where love awoke her tenderest strains;
Of humble Virtue's justly-granted meed;
But chief he sang of human joys and pains,
The harvest gathered from a shell of seed,
The pleasant plains of Peace, and Truth's unselfish deed.

And Monro saw, where'er his footsteps went,
Where'er his eye in musing wonder rolled,
In pictured hall, or peasant's lowly tent,
How freely men would bow the knee to gold.
Worth in the cottage felt the bitter cold,
And shivered in the thin weeds of Neglect.
But this rough rigour only made him bold
To do the right, nor any meed expect,
By stern rebuffs unmoved, by haughty looks unchecked.

He knew the bitterness, when weakness came,
And Age had drawn his razor o'er his head,
When sudden sickness paralyzed his frame,
To be outstripped by those of quicker tread,
His yearly earnings snapped in two like thread,
Which caused the clouds about his path to lower,
And barely brought his lessened household bread.
Yet still his faith in the Eternal Power
Retained its earnest hold e'en at the eleventh hour.

And strange it was to Monro's feeling heart,
That men should prize the cymbal's hollow roar,
To the soft music which the reeds impart,
When harvest moonlight streams along the shore.
Oft would he listen on the sounding moor
To the low sighing of the solemn brake,
Which filled his spirit with a richer lore
Than any sounds a clan of tongues can make,
Or all the ragged blasts which babbling brags create.

'Twas somewhat hard to be misunderstood,
Among the people whom he called his own;
To battle lonely with the foaming flood,
Where heaps of wreckage had been wildly thrown;
To hear the lofty, lashing billows moan,
And feel the ice-shafts rattling on his head,
In angry gusts by bitter Boreas blown, [spread:
Where gilt-clad Pride her leaden scorn-clouds
But Monro knew that he was by Jehovah led.

And hard it was upon the desert's rim,
In cold and wind and awful mist to stand,
While far away was seen his home-roof dim,
And deepening darkness filled the lonely land,
Like the last member of a scattered band,
Straining his gaze into the mystic night,
Feeling the pressure of a powerful hand,
Unable to resist its cruel might,
Anxious to press him down and push him out of sight.

The tedious trials of his earthly lot,
The darkness dropping from the cloudy sky,
His toilsome task o'er many a stony spot,
Where thorn and thistle in sharp ambush lie,
And bitter waters roll in blackness by,
Were sent to wean him from this world of sin,
To turn his thoughts to fairer fields on high,
Which all Messiah's faithful followers win,
Who fight the fight of faith and are with Heaven
shut in.

And it was well, these burdens on the road,
They neither were too heavy nor too small:
His Father's love put on the pressing load,
And so with tears he thanked Him for it all.
A little while, and then would come the call,
To leave the work-field to another's hand,
Whose feet might on the scanty herbage fall,
Where in the wind his cherished song-plants stand,
And shreds of murmuring verse fill the forsaken land.

When will man's restless spirit be content
Within the boundaries of delicious rest?
Not till he comes to Him whom love hath sent
That godly sorrow may be truly blest.
O, evermore be mine, soul-saving Guest,
Till grief is past, and anguish is unknown,
Where tumult's tossings can no more molest,
Nor waves rise raging to the tempest's moan,
Safe anchored in the stars to God's eternal throne.

We court employment, and whene'er it comes
We sigh because the task is not complete,
Then sigh again to bear such martyrdoms,
Which leave us weary both in brain and feet.
And yet without it life were but a cheat.
Better to strive to do our little well,
So that the scroll of time may be complete,
When through the valleys rolls the trumpet's swell,
And sea and storm and surge prolong wrecked Nature's knell.

O, why so eager to supplant him now,
Before his threescore years have run their round,
When mellow manhood beams upon his brow,
And holy ardour in his soul is found?
Is it because he hears another sound,
Which may not tremble o'er the rushing crowd,
Nor in the walks of Mammon's peers be found,
Where cunning craftsmen beat their timbrels loud,
Until the solid rocks and iron hills seem bowed?

Has he not humbly walked along his way,
Nor sought position from his favoured race,
Content to labour ever day by day,
And eat his bread with tears upon his face:
Not puffing, pride-fed, panting after place,
But seeking guidance from the Lord on high,
So as to wear the mantle of His grace,
And by the road-side in the shade to lie,
Hearing the tramp of feet that proudly pass him by?

O hear him, Father, as with misty eyes
He looks to heaven from earth's beclouded plain!
O, send him succour from the opening skies,
To cheer his spirit like refreshing rain!
Whatever is, O let him not complain,
But meekly bow to Thy Divine decree!
Let resignation in his bosom reign,
And true submission, though his ills may be
Where he expected gales to fan his summer sea.

And there are others standing 'neath the stars,
Who need the greater Light to show the way.
O Power Eternal! break the prison-bars,
And lead the captives into perfect day!
Let those who once beneath his roof-tree lay,
Sunned with the love that trusting childhood brings,
Now hurried onward in the world's wild fray,
Where in the glens another echo rings,
Be sheltered evermore beneath Thy healing wings!

Amen, O Father! Let Thy graces reign
In hearts entwined so closely with his own,
That all and each the hills of home may gain,
And meet in bliss around Thy glorious throne,
When the isles reel, and earth is overthrown,
And the last echo rumbles on the deep,
Whose gory billows heave their final moan,
And redly roll on the forsaken steep,
And the last trumpet's notes through ruined nature sweep.

His love for silence ripened with his years,
And stronger grew as time went stealing by:
In clamorous cells he longed for it with tears,
And then again would wipe his watery eye.
O, would it come to cheer him by-and-by,
Before he reached the end of life's low plain,
And in the grave beneath the grass did lie,
And robin sang his sweetest, tenderest strain?
Yet Monro looked and sighed and longed for rest in vain.

His closet was the angle of a crag,
Where the winds whisper o'er the mossy sod,
Tuning the crest of every fern-kissed flag,
And bringing music from the slenderest rod.
His prayers he offered where the willows nod,
And waters murmur gently o'er the sand:
Under the spreading sky he worshipped God,
Whose wondrous presence fills the listening land
As bounteous as in domes with beams of cedar spanned.

The twigs that rustle when the winds are low,
The trees that nod their heads when clouds appear,
The dear wild flowers that mid the grasses grow,
The sky-lark's song when the far heavens are clear,
The tinkling brooklet falling in the mere,
The star-beams lying on the rolling wave,
And all the mysteries of the upper sphere,
To Monro's heart religious lessons gave
More strong that pulpit lore however rich or grave.

The lark to him outvied all earthly song,
Warbling in wonder on the spires of light,
Or soaring heavenward the white clouds among,
Whose notes grow sweeter on its upward flight,
Filling the vales of ether with delight,
And scattering lyre-jets on earth's lonliest bowers,
As dear as when he watched it out of sight,
Stretched on the fern in morning's rosy hours,
While from its trembling heart rich music gushed in showers.

Bird of all time, bird of the prophet's ken,
Bird of the poet's most delicious strain,
Bird of the heath, bird of the cultured glen,
Bird of the mountain and the grassy plain,
Singing its soul out o'er the hawthorn lane,
Trilling sweet triumphs where clear waters glide,
Lessening the rack of human woe and pain,
As if a seraph swept the welkin wide,
And heaven's own harpings flowed in one harmonious tide!

How oft he languished for the smallest fire
Within the poorest, narrowest, loneliest cell,
Where he in peace might tune his simple lyre,
And unmolested with his volumes dwell!
Denied him in his youth's mysterious spell,
Denied him now when age has come at last,
And o'er the hill-tops sounds the solemn bell,
And the last messenger approaches fast,
And hollow notes uprise upon the hurrying blast.

O why deny him that which gives him health,
And more than gold or silver could afford!
Among the sons of men he seeks not wealth,
Or costly dainties to enrich his board.
To him his little narrow room accord,
Where quiet reigns, and he will ask no more.
O, give him this from plenty's swelling hoard,
And he will bless you from the other shore,
Where silence dwells supreme, and discord pains no more.

Three years he grasped it with a miser's joy,
Three years it filled him with a bliss unknown,
Three years he revelled in his dear employ
Beneath a ceiling which he called his own;
And then a cloud from Fortune's frigid zone
Came rolling round him in his days of pain,
And what he valued most was quickly flown,
Like rose-leaves scattered with untimely rain,
And he was forced to muse mid lanes and leas again.

'Twas hard! 'twas hard! but Monro murmured not,
His Father knew what best His child could bear;
He wished to bow submissive to his lot,
And leave his guidance to Jehovah's care.
He gives, He takes, and doth in mercy spare,
And life has more of sunshine than of shade;
This Monro knew, and in the circling air
With Nature's self his ringing rhymes he made,
Still treasuring jets of song from wood and winding glade.

The leer of envy may not stop his reed,
The loss of friends, or friendship's golden store,
A childless hut, a face of abject need,
Nor e'en the black-browed, heavy workhouse door.
In adverse blasts his muse will trill the more.
Earthquake and fire may not destroy his song,
Nor wan disaster's sternest, wildest roar,
Where desolation swiftly stalks along,
And he is earthward hurled his ruined shrines among.

Nature had not foregone a single charm,
Although his hair was verging into grey,
And sudden weakness had impaired his arm,
And strangely ta'en the flush of life away.
Her face was still the sunny face of May,
In dark, in light, in rolling storm or calm,
When sleet-showers quench the music of the spray,
Or woods are ringing to the throstle's psalm,
Her every phase to him brought most delicious balm.

Boys shouting strongly to their shouting mates,
Steeped in the sunshine of the joyous game;
Boys wildly swinging on the orchard gates,
Or whistling to the larks with sharp acclaim;
Boys with the newest school-prize all a-flame,
In twos, or threes, or earnest groups of ten,
To vaunt the vaunter their ambitious aim,
In hamlet-shade, or on the mossy fen,
With eyes where wonder gleamed, were dear to Monro's ken.

Children to him were flowers from heavenly grounds,
Which angels drop upon the earth's cold sod,
Expanding brightly in love's hallowed bounds,
At eve and morn by feet of cherubs trod:
Their eyes glance sunshine where slim grasses nod,
And their glad voices cause the wilds to ring,
As if far off pealed forth the trumps of God.
Where'er they glide sweet flowers of blessing spring,
Rich verdure clothes the earth, and lonely deserts sing.

The world without them would be dark indeed,
Like vernal valleys stript of loveliest flowers,
Or brakes of bird-notes in the July mead,
Or April of her welcome urn of showers.
What music make they in home's holy bowers,
Which else would be as solemn as the night!
Their simple prattle cheats the lazy hours,
So that the wrinkled face of Care looks bright,
And glow the tents of time with rays of rosy light.

Ripe thoughts they symbol of the poet's brain,
Heaped up in song-sheaves o'er the fruitful land,
Or bars of sunshine on the ringing plain,
Crossed and re-crossed with many a golden strand,
So weirdly woven by apt Fancy's hand,
Till they assume the shapes of all things rare,
That finite minds can fitly understand,
Which gild the earth, or throng the boundless air,
Or quaff the wine of flowers on Flora's golden stair.

And much of earth to Monro's heart was dear,—
The corn collected in a bearded shock,
The water through the rushes gurgling clear,
The rising moon, the wild bird on the rock;
But more than all, the mother with her flock,
When beetles hum, and day is almost spent,
When soup for father bubbles in the crock,
Relating some Old Testament event,
Or reading from the Book which God Himself hath sent.

And when he thanked the Giver for His grace,
For life and love and all created things,
His praises rose for childhood's lovely face,
And the pure bliss which trusting childhood brings.
Their ditties flow like breezes by the springs,
When Eve is folding all her loves to rest,
When visions glimmer as the down of wings,
And song is swelling from the lily's breast,
And wafts of prayer swell through the portals of the West.

The loftiest labour man can e'er perform,
Is that which tends to mitigate distress;
To shield bereavement from the biting storm,
And make oppression's iron fetters less;
The bending suppliant in his rags to bless,
To take the child of genius by the hand,
And guide him on to learning's fair recess;
To shield the widow with her orphan band,
And plough the meads of peace at Heaven's divine command.

The present only may be claimed by man,
The past and future are with God alone.
How wise to cultivate the little span
Which Heaven vouchsafeth as the pilgrim's own!
To improve the hour ere it is swiftly flown,
And render back to Him His purchased due,
Whose mercy meets us from His golden throne,
And by His Spirit forms our hearts anew,
And brings the trees of heaven before our ravished view!

His native Cornwall, which his heart has worn
Like some bright crystal in the waters clear,
Though crowding ills his soul have often torn,
Is yet to Monro like a daughter dear.
Her hills and glens in softened light appear,
And all her waters have a liquid sound,
Like that which fell upon his youthful ear
When first his harp among the hills he found;
And robes of ringing rhyme her fairy form surround.

What seas of blueness does she rise between,
Which are in thunders or deep murmurs spent!
What verse-veiled boulders from her hillocks lean,
What tender wildings gem each craggy rent!
What landscapes green, what tors magnificent!
What sands, and rock-birds, and dear rose-hung lanes!
What maidens smiling by the woodbined tent!
What wives and mothers on her pasturing plains!
What crag-carved heights to chime her wild and wondrous strains!

May Heaven preserve her in the time of need,
And shield her from the pangs of war and strife!
May she the precepts of the Bible heed,
And walk with humble feet the way of life!
O, save the child, the husband, and the wife,
Whether located on the common brown,
Or where the sounds of industry are rife,
From error's taint, and bigotry's dark frown,
And may she ever grow in virtue and renown.

And when the pulse of life shall throb no more,
At His command, and its red currents freeze,
When silence comes, and busy day is o'er,
Monro would sleep beneath her whispering trees,
Where sing the birds, and hum the homeward bees,
And blush the flowers when Spring is passing by,
As notes unnumbered float upon the breeze,
And he will watch her from the upper sky,
And at eve's musing hour will sometimes near her fly.

Farewell! farewell! A voice is in his ear,
That time's fleet hour-glass is expending fast,
The glittering grains run faster year by year,
With soundless drop, and soon will fall the last.
O Thou who through the gloomy grave hast past,
Send Thy good Spirit to renew our own!
May doubt and fear for ever be outcast,
And then uplift us to Thy glorious throne,
Where faith expands no more, and perfect love is known!

His task is ended, and he feels like one
Whose boat is rocking 'neath the island trees,
Where gorgeous birds are fluttering in the sun,
And harps ring sweetness on the sauntering breeze:
The hills and vales, where hum the honey bees,
Are those he laboured to discover long,
Sailing hope-beckoned over unknown seas, [strong.
Though fierce winds blew, and beat the billows
Once more farewell! farewell! Thus closeth Monro's song.

MINOR POEMS.

A FANCY.

A QUIET dingle by the floods!
And when the day was very fine,
And rose the music of the woods
In melody divine,

I took my staff, and forth did pace,
Just after June's refreshing showers,
And marked in this sequestered place
A company of flowers.

The fresh breeze shook them on their stems,
And they seemed chatting in the glade,
With many-coloured diadems,
In rainbow robes arrayed:—
The daisy with its humble face,
The celandine, the lady's smock,
The lily wrapped in gentlest grace,
The moss-cup on the rock.

"I wonder can they talk," said I,
"And what their words are in the sun?
The blueness of the distant sky,
And how the waters run?
The loveliness of all things rare,
The beauty of the dark green wood,
The mystery of the silent air,
That God to all is good?"

With that a breath of fragrance swept
Across my face, and o'er my frame,
So that for very love I wept
That thitherward I came:
And ceaseless voices seemed to sound,
Where rude rocks long in grandeur stood,
And wildings gemmed the lower ground,
That God to all is good.

I hugged the fancy of my brain,
Though it was lighter than the air,—
That these bright flowerets of the plain
Conversed together there.
There are ethereal links which bind
The earth, if rightly understood,
Fast to the everlasting Mind.
O, God to all is good.

OLD NEVELL WEST.

THE sound of rain was on the moor,
The sound of rain was at my door,
When forth I wandered lone;
And by a gorse-bush gaily drest,
Sat on a bank old Nevell West,
Beside a Druid stone.

"What! Nevell?" said I, "you out here,
Where fairies dance about the mere,
And elfs hang on the trees!"
"Yes, Sir," said he, "I felt o'erdone,
And longed once more to feel the sun,
And drink the healthy breeze.

"The fresh air has a wondrous spell
To make a sick man almost well,
Whate'er his numerous ills,

Murmuring among the bubbling springs,
And the sweet sounds the morning brings
Down from the silent hills.

"I've reared ten children in yon shed,
Nor wanted they a meal of bread;
I bless the Lord for this.
But now my joints are stiff, you see,
Almost like that old blasted tree
When wintry whirlwinds hiss.

"No prince a zest like mine could feel,
When sitting at my humble meal
Under a hedge or tree.
I thanked my God with tearful eyes,
As I do now beneath these skies
Which calmly smile on me.

"If men would learn to be content
With what the Lord of Life hath sent,
How soon the world would change?
The leopard with the lamb would fold,
The flinty rocks turn into gold
On every stormy range.

"Good-bye, Sir! It will come at last,
When giant War is pinioned fast,
To lift his arm no more,
Nor shot, nor shell, nor trumpet's blare,
Nor clang of armies rend the air,
From peaceful shore to shore.

"But I must leave this hilly ground,
I hear the rain-god's rushing sound.
Have confidence in Heaven."
And down the path old Nevell stole,
Leaving a lesson in my soul
By Truth's own angel given.

LITTLE JOSEPH.

THE day was done, the supper past,
The Bible brought once more:
But ere the good man read a line,
A knock was on the door.
And there a boy of ten years old
Stood underneath the vine,
And O how very pale he looked,
And how his eyes did shine!

"What do you here, my little lad?
Why are you not in bed?"
He touched his cap respectfully,
"I seek for work," he said.
"Last Sunday night our bread was done,
And mother did so weep!
So we went supperless to bed,
And cried ourselves to sleep.

"And when the morning light appeared,
I left my mother there,
And on the door-step of our home
I made my little prayer,—
That God would tell me where to go,
And guide my wandering feet,
That dearest mother might not starve,
But have enough to eat.

"I slowly oped the garden gate,
That mother might not hear,
And, looking back to see our home,
I brushed away the tear:
Then hurried on, I knew not where,
So hungry and alone,
And said my prayer when night was come,
And slept upon a stone.

"Then I got up and ran for heat;
And thus a week passed by,
My bed the ground, my covering grass,
My roof the starry sky.
I think the Lord has sent me here,
And you will let me stay:
I came straight onward to your door,
And never missed the way."

"Come in, come in," the wife exclaimed.
And he was washed and fed,
And very soon lay fast asleep
Upon the softest bed.

There little Joseph laboured long,
Through many a changeful year,
A servant faithful to his trust,
Following the Lord with fear.

That little wandering boy became
A preacher of the Word,
And many sin-sick souls through him
Were led to Christ the Lord.
Love-tears were shed upon his bier,
Which Christian hearts became,
And Mercy wove a wreath for him,
And Honour crowned his name.

THE TWO WOODMEN.

A Woodman walked the forest lone,
With prickly brushwood overgrown;
His axe he sharpened on a stone.

The night was closing o'er the wold,
The wind was fierce, the sleet was cold,
The Woodman was both lame and old.

His time was o'er, his strength was tried,
And so his axe he feebly plied,
With erring aim, before he died.

Beneath the wet shroud of the blast,
Upon the ground his form he cast,
And there the OLD YEAR breathed his last.

A younger Woodman, when the gale
Of solemn midnight tore the sail,
And smote the lattice with a wail,

Stalked strongly o'er the lonely land,
And took the axe, like shining brand,
From out the Dead Man's frozen hand.

And voices rose from glade and glen,
From highway old and mossy fen,
From busy marts and hives of men:—

"Hew down, Young Woodman, every tree
Whose branches are not firm and free,
Whose roots strike not in liberty.

"Hew down, hew down the foes of peace,
That war and waste at last may cease,
And let the palms of God increase."

And the night winds, with sudden sway,
Caught up the mystery on their way,
And echoed back the NEW YEAR'S lay.

THE CENTURION AND HIS SERVANT.

LUKE VII. C., I. TO X. V.

GREEN palms bend o'er the waters,
The sunbeams tinge the spray,
And through the summer stillness
Careers the god of Day.
A thousand flowers are shining
By mossy stone and spring,
Where woodland echoes murmur,
And birds their anthems sing.

Within a stately mansion,
Beneath the cedar's shade,
The rich centurion's dwelling,
A servant low was laid.
The pulse grew slow, and slower,
The feeble body tired,
And whispers filled the chamber,
For life had just expired.

The master loved his servant,
Who to his heart was dear;
And in that hour of anguish
He dropped the silent tear.
When tidings came of Jesus,
Whose fame had filled the place,
The lowly Son of David,
The Healer of our race.

He sent at once to seek Him,
No moment he delayed;
The elders of his people
Implored the Saviour's aid.
O, they besought Him greatly,
And much they joyed to tell
How he had built a temple,
And loved his nation well.

He listened to their pleading,
With mild and gentle brow,
And features of compassion,
As Jesus listens now.
And 'neath the murmuring olives
He travelled with the throng
To the centurion's dwelling,
The flowery meads among.

And when they neared the mansion,
Beside the lakelets clear,
The good centurion's message
Fell on their listening ear:—
"I feel I am not worthy
That Christ should come to me,
Nor merit I the favour
To go, my Lord, to Thee.

"But only breathe a murmur,
Say to the slayer, Stand!
And ebbing life shall kindle
At Thy Divine command.

For under me are soldiers,
Who at my nod are stirred,
Who ever do my bidding,
Nor disobey my word."

Then Christ addressed the people,
As they around Him stand,
That He no faith had witnessed
Like this in all the land.
And when they reached the dwelling,
O'er which the bright birds soared,
They found the grateful servant
To perfect health restored.

Thrice happy the believer
Who feels a faith like this,
Which opes the gates of promise,
And fills the soul with bliss;
Basks in the King's own favour,
Rests on the Living Rod,
Soars with the shining seraph,
And grasps the throne of God!

MEG MATTHEWS.

The street was narrow where I passed,
With an oppressive gloom o'ercast;
And, let the day be foul or fair,
The sunlight never enters there.

Half-leaning o'er a hovel-hatch,
Which bore the signs of nail and patch,
Meg Matthews watched the sombre scene,
With much of coldness in her mien.

Her age, perhaps, was threescore years,
Sojourning in this vale of tears.
Her cheeks were pale, her eyes were sad,
And she was rather poorly clad.

I know not if she lived alone,
Or had a daughter of her own,
Or if her husband loved the tap
More than his settle by the map.

A fish-man passed me with his creel,
And cried his wares with wondrous zeal,
A penny each for whiting rare,
As fresh as flowers in meadow air.

"How cheap they are?" I said to Meg,
Who had not moved a single peg,
As if the sound she did not catch,
Half-leaning o'er the hovel-hatch.

Her answer I shall ne'er forget;
Her absent look is with me yet,
Though months have passed and seasons many,
"Yes, master,—IF WE HAVE A PENNY."

How much of life these words express !
How much of unrevealed distress !
The cheapest thing to him is dear
Whose purse is empty all the year.

RACHEL.

THE Old Year's eve had slowly come,
Like pilgrim down the moor,
And the last sun-rays faintly fell
Upon the prison floor :
When to the grating Rachel climbed,
Upon a broken chest,
And turned her eyes, o'erbrimmed with tears,
Upon the kindling West.

Three years of penal servitude
It was her lot to bear,
Beneath the weary, wasting chain,
For crimes which others share.
But when the morrow's sun shall rise
Over the earth and sea,
And the New Year assume its place,
Poor Rachel will be free.

She watched it low and lower sink,
Until it disappears;
And then the silvery stars came forth,
And glittered on her tears.
She saw the shining spangles stream
Through the lone prison tree,
And sighed, as she lay down to rest,
"To-morrow I am free!"

How very long that night appeared,
Is only known to him
Who sits within the cavern's gloom
Beside the taper dim,
Which flickers to its final flare,
Like the dull eye of Woe,
Who hears no sweet approaching voice,
And knows not where to go.

Her feelings were too strong for words,
Too strong for painter's skill,
Like rushing winds across the woods,
Or waters down the hill.
For in a cottage by the brook,
Where she in childhood strayed,
When beauty blossomed everywhere,
She left her baby-maid.

The New Year's morning broke at last,
The bolts were thrust aside,
The huge key grated in the lock,
The door was opened wide;

And forth she went with bended head,
And prison-branded brow.
Have charity, O child of Christ,
And pray for Rachel now.

She passed the field her husband ploughed,
She passed the leafy limes,
She caught her daughter in her arms,
She kissed her fifty times :
Then wiped her eyes, and sobbed her joy,
And still another strain,
Another kiss, another hug.
She never sinned again.

THE BOY AND THE BLUE-BELLS.

A SIMPLE thing!—A narrow lane,
Just shining with the passing rain,
Where breezes kiss the buds of May,
And murmuring sounds are wont to stray.

One morn, when slowly walking here,
Where flowers in vernal gold appear,
I felt a sadness in my soul,
As solemn as a funeral toll.

I cannot tell the reason why,
And yet the tears were in mine eye,
Although the sun was overhead,
And Nature's beauties round me spread.

A linnet chirped from the morass,
A bee hummed homeward o'er the grass,
High overhead the larks were glad,
And yet somehow my heart was sad.

The sounds of music reached my ear,
The quiet ocean murmured near,
The glens in richest green were clad,
And yet somehow my heart was sad.

Just then a fair-haired boy came by,
With laughter beaming in his eye,
And bore he from the dingle-land
A bunch of blue-bells in his hand.

The flowers and he were both so bright,
My heart exulted in the sight;
The clouds were gone, my night was day,
And Joy wiped all my tears away.

It glads me still when sunlight gleams,
And Flora muses by the streams,
Or Winter cowers beside the brand,
That boy with blue-bells in his hand.

The simplest thing that meets us here,
A smile, a look, a word of cheer,
May scatter oft the gloom of night,
And fill our onward path with light.

THE BASKET AND ITS BURDEN.

The breath of flowers was on the air,
One quiet eve in May,
The supper things upon the board,
Nor did they brook delay.
When lo! a knocking at the door,
Which made the household start,
And Mary rose to open it,
With throbbing of the heart.

She looked across, she looked around,
She glanced along the street,
But nothing saw she, save—how strange!—
A basket at her feet.
And when the covering was removed,
And oped the linen seams,
A little boy was sleeping there,
And smiling in his dreams.

The letter gave no clue to show
Whose child the babe might be,—
A few lines in a lady's hand,—
"Bring up my boy for me.
And God will be your rich reward,
Though I am tempest-tossed,
And smitten with the winds of wrong,
Till my poor name is lost."

The matron smiled, the sire looked grave,
The Union-House was named,
And kissed was he, that baby bright,
And to her bosom strained;
And I believe a tear ran down,
For one beneath the sod:
"No, no! she cried, "we'll keep him here,
And bring him up for God."

And blest they were in after-life
For charity so pure:
The love they gave returned again
With pleasures that endure.
And when grey hairs were on their brows,
And shadows round them lay,
As evening stole along the heights,
He was their chiefest stay.

The boy thus sheltered 'neath their roof,
And at their table fed,
Grew up to preach the cross of Christ,
Where heathen tents were spread.

And though his lonely grave was made
Within the forest's gloom,
The angels from the higher hills
Are watching by his tomb.

HAGAR.

GENESIS, XVI. AND XXI. C.

He who in spirit prayeth,
And doth God's mercy plead,
No matter what his burden,
Of words has little need.
When Hagar o'er the desert
Did in her sorrow plod,
This was her brief petition,
"Thou seest me, O God!"

Over the wild she wandered,
Over the boundless wild,
Over the great Beersheba,
Leading her only child.
Over their heads the sunshine,
Under their feet the ground,
Joys deep-buried behind them,
Solitude all around.

Now her bottle of water
Is in the desert spent:
There is no murmuring river,
There is no friendly tent.
Sorrow has covered her spirit,
Sorrow has bowed her head,
Sorrow has made her silent,
Filling her soul with dread.

Keener, sharper, and quicker,
Deepens the terrible sting,
Smiting through all her being,
Which her lad's tear-sobs bring.
"Water! O mother, water!
Ah! I can scarcely live.
Water! O mother, water!"
And she has none to give!

Under the shrubs she placed him,
Under the shrubs to lie,
Under the shrubs to famish,
Under the shrubs to die:
Sitting apart in anguish,
Under the glare of day,
Hidden among the herbage,
Hidden to weep and pray.

Over the wild an echo,
Over the wild a sound,
"Hagar, sorrowing Hagar,
Listen, and leave the ground.

God hath seen thy trouble,
God hath heard the lad,
God will save in pity,
Making the mother glad."

As lightning quickly flashes
Over the hollow dell,
Opened the eyes of Hagar
Upon the clearest well.
Filling the empty bottle,
He drank with eager joy.
O, God was to his promise,
And God was with the boy.

A HIDDEN LIFE.

THE ways which men are thronging so,
Replete with discord, noise, and show,
Attracting crowds to hear and see,
Have no delights at all for me.

O let me live a hidden life,
Apart from bustle, pomp, and strife,
Where Nature's book of beauty gleams,
With fields and forests, stones and streams.

A homely, hidden life be mine,
Where flowers on mossy banks recline,
And music murmurs round the crags,
The waving trees and water-flags.

With winds that through the forests sport,
Let me in solitude resort,
Secluded from the curious gaze
By ferns that fringe the pathless maze.

The farther off, the happier I,
My seat the sod, my roof the sky,
My hymn, the rustle of the reed,
My book, the sprouting of the seed.

The glens have precepts God-impressed,
Where teachings triumph unexpressed,
And voices murmur in the soul
Which o'er the hills of Eden stole.

Here let my spirit oft receive
The mystery of the musing Eve,
And spend, apart from noise and glee,
A hidden life, O Lord, with Thee.

THE WIDOW'S TRUST.

I MET a woman on my way,
When spring buds gemmed the shining spray,
In weeds of mourning clad;
A little dog was by her side,
And now and then her face he eyed,
Which looked so very sad.

"Good day," said I, "the flowers are bright,
The bees are humming with delight,
The larks are overhead."
She looked at me, and sadly sighed,
And then to wipe a tear she tried,
And very softly said:

"Yes Sir! But when the heart is lone,
The waters lose their silvery tone,
The flowers their healing charm.
Look where I will a shadow falls,
Like that which drapes a prison walls,
Or shrouds Disaster's arm.

"In yon lone cottage by the mere,
We lived for many a happy year,
And we five children had:
And then a wind came from the east,
Which roared like some relentless beast,
In dreadful terror clad.

"My husband was the first to go;
I watched him through the midnight slow,
And then the call was given.
And soon my youngest child grew ill,
And then my darling little Will,
And both went up to heaven.

"The three were buried in one grave,
Just where the whispering willows wave:
O, I was blind that day.
And then the angels called another;
And then his little wasted brother
At noontide went away.

"Have you lost any children, Sir?
You have, or else I greatly err;
I see it in your eye.
For sorrow darkens every door,
No matter whether rich or poor,
Of lowly rank or high.

"The dog whined with me by the hearth,
As if he knew my utter dearth,
My all of life that's left.
So we go out a wandering now,
By sluggish stream and broken bough,
And shadow-haunted cleft.

"But He who weaves the shades of night,
Calls forth the cheering morning light
On wakening vale and hill.

Though earth has nought to glad mine eye,
A light shines for me in the sky:
My God is with me still.

"I thank you for the interest shown;
'Tis good to make our trials known,
It lessens human woe.
You are the first my griefs to hear,
Which seem already less severe.
Good bye, Sir! I must go."

And in the windings of the lane
She soon was lost among the cane
That canopied the rill.
And yet her words retain the power
To cheer me in life's weary hour,—
"My God is with me still."

THE TRACT.

'Twas but a tract a lady gave,
Yet it was used a soul to save;
That soul, to godliness restored,
Gave all his talents to the Lord.

A stone unpolished from the mine,
It shone at last by power Divine,
Till it became a precious gem
Fit for the Saviour's diadem.

His willing hands he rested now
In faith upon the Gospel plough;
And it was seen by those around
That he the Pearl of Truth had found.

By word and deed, by look and pen,
He called upon the sons of men,
To bow beneath religion's rod,
And numbers gave their hearts to God.

And these the King did thus restore
Were used in bringing hundreds more:
And thousands yet His grace will save
Through that small tract the lady gave.

LEONARDO DA VINCI.

WHERE Florence rose in beauty
Out of the flowing sea,
The street-caged birds he purchased,
That he might set them free.
And as they left their prisons,
An outburst of their joy
Rang on the fragrant breezes,
With sweet thanks to the boy.

No wonder such a childhood,
Replete with heavenly grace,
Developed into kindness
For all the human race.
No wonder blessings thronged it,
Which in such love began,
And that the meek da Vinci
Became the friend of man.

Along the path we travel
What cabined ones there be,
Whom sympathy's pure spirit
Alone can render free!
The smallest earthly favour,
A word, a smile, a breath,
A tender recognition,
May save a soul from death.

Then let us seek to bnry
The bitter weeds of strife,
And plant the flowers of kindness
Along the way of life.
And while we comfort others,
Who may have walked amiss,
Our souls shall share a portion
Of the unuttered bliss.

No joy this great joy equals,
Wherever man may be,
To cheer the brokenhearted,
And set the captive free.

And he who feeds the hungry,
  And honours silvery hair,
Is blest beyond the slayer
  Who lays a kingdom bare.

REEDEN, THE INEBRIATE'S DAUGHTER.

In the doorway of his dwelling,
  'Neath the moon he stood,
Her white waves of softness swelling
  Over field and flood.

But he cared not for the whiteness
  Filling tor and tree,
Or the tender moonlight brightness:
  Drunk—how drunk was he!

Holding by the latch, he staggered
  As he listened there,
Ragged, hollow-eyed, and haggard,
  To his child at prayer.

"Blessed Saviour, hear my pleading,
  Wash me in Thy blood!
Thou for us art interceding:
  Make my father good.

"Bring him from the house of liquor,
Where bad people be,
Drinking that which makes them sicker:
Mother waits with me.

"Dearest mother is so sickly,
Full of nameless fears:
If my father came here quickly,
She would dry her tears.

"In the public house he's staying,
By the landlord's light.
Gentle Jesus! hear me praying:
Keep us all to-night!"

And he felt an inward shaking
At her gentle tone.
Might not such a sweet outbreaking
Move a heart of stone?

Never more he left his Reeden
For the landlord's smile:
And his own home changed to Eden
In a little while.

MAURAMELL AND HER GRANDFATHER.

They left him in his old farm-home,
Among the English meads,
When April songs awoke the dell,
And songs were in the reeds.
Far o'er the swelling seas they sailed,
Where oft the wild winds sweep,
And voices travel on the waves,
To lands beyond the deep.

His little grandchild, Mauramell,
Her mother and her sire,
Had gone to seek a western home,
And western arts acquire.
And as the old man sat at home,
Or paced the flowery lea,
He whispered softly to himself,
"My grandchild prays for me."

Sometimes he mused in thoughtful mood
Beside his lonely hearth,
And other days came back to him,
When bright resolves had birth,
And children, now beneath the yew,
Had clambered to his knee;
And sighed the old man in his chair,
"My grandchild prays for me."

Green fields were his, with grazing kine,
And milk and honey too;
For God had blest his basket much,
To His high promise true.
But more than all his heart rejoiced,
As day by day mused he,
With great drops shining in his eyes,
"My grandchild prays for me."

Ay, more than litany sublime,
When tapers flicker dim, [streams,
And moonlight through the stained glass
Was this sweet thought to him.
Above all earthly love it rose,
Of infinite degree,
Surpassing every other joy,—
"My grandchild prays for me."

He saw her in their forest-home,
When sheep-bells chimed afar,
And Twilight slowly walked the woods
Beneath the evening star,
With folded hands, and close-shut eyes,
Beside her mother's knee;
And, gazing into space, he sighed,
"My grandchild prays for me."

And when pale Eve, with pipe of peace,
Sat in the willow shade,
And glow-worms glittered by the brook,
And sparkled in the glade:

When solemn mystery clothed the grass,
And hung upon the tree,
The old man sobbed, with bended head,
"My grandchild prays for me."

It followed him from place to place,
Its import did not cease;
It raised his heart to higher things,
It filled his soul with peace.
It cheered the pilgrim's homeward steps,
It gave him eyes to see,
And sunned the rugged wilderness,—
"My grandchild prays for me."

And when the end of life drew near,
With heaven's high towers in view,
He sweetly smiled upon his bed,
And felt its power anew.
His eyes closed slowly on the hills
Across his own green lea,
As his last whispered utterance fell,
"My grandchild prays for me."

OLD ROB.

THE house he lived in was so small,
It scarcely looked a house at all,
With door of deal, and roof of reed,
Within the corner of a mead.

And here, when I was but a boy,
Old Rob pursued his plain employ,
With awl and last and beater sound,
To mend the shoes of those around.

Sometimes I left my game of play,
To saunter down the village way,
Where by the hedge a streamlet ran,
To look in on the dear old man.

He only read one standard Book,
From which the way of life he took:
Content with what the Lord hath given,
His bread on earth, and hope of heaven.

So he dwelt here but little known,
Yet linked to God's eternal throne,
Sustained by fruits which Zion yields,
Alone with Nature and the fields.

One day I met him in the lane,
When meadows waved with golden grain,
And gossamers entwined the reed,
And scythes were ringing on the mead.

Old Rob was walking by a tree.
"Good day," said I. He looked at me,
And I could hear him heave a sigh,
And knew the tears were in his eye.

His well-patched coat was so threadbare!
His hat was much the worse for wear,
Without the semblance of a band;
A stick he carried in his hand.

His back was on his cottage-floor,
His face towards the workhouse door,
And every step, he knew full well,
Conveyed him nearer to the cell.

And yet methought a halo glowed
Around him on that toilsome road,
As if the angels stooped the while
And touched his features with a smile.

I could have cried with utter woe,
To see a good man brought so low,
But that I feared to dim the light
Which made the face of Rob so bright.

"My hands," quoth he, "are numb with pain,
I cannot ply my trade again.
My sight is dim, and slow my pace;
My hammer strikes another place.

"My bed went first, and then my chair,
And then the cape of Sunday wear,
And then my lapstone, twine and awls,
Till I had nought but empty walls.

"But hunger, Sir, is fiercely wild,
Within the breast of man or child.
I trust its fangs your home will flee.
My God, I know, will care for me.

"Good-bye, good-bye! I'll cling to HIM,
Though life and all its joys are dim.
My faith in God shall waver not,
Although He slay me on the spot."

Then on he went, and left me there
Like one awoke from vision fair,
Where sweetest flowers adorn the ground,
With heaven above me and around.

The workhouse bolts were thrust aside,
The workhouse gate was opened wide,
Which creaked upon its bars of sin,
To let a love-crowned angel in.

CHRISTMAS.

RIGHT welcome art thou, dear old friend,
With song and rustic mirth,
Although the rich go other ways,
And pass our humble hearth.
There was a time when thou didst come
More cheery to our room;
But those who hailed us with their loves
Are sleeping in the tomb.

But though the spell which childhood wore
Has lost its tinsel now,
We hail thee for thy smiling face,
And for thy laurelled brow;
And offer thee a cushioned seat,
Beside the birchen log,
Where tales go round of other days,
When Merit walked incog.

We have our trials on the road—
Perhaps mankind have more—
Rough seas and shoals and stormy skies,
And reefs along the shore.
But we contrive to slip them all,
When thou o'er earth hast sway,
And trace on life's strange calendar
New mercies on our way.

Although the Fates are somewhat cross,
And stingy from their hoard,
We have a slice of John Bull's own,
A pudding on the board.
And notes of praise and thankfulness
Flow forth from son and sire,
And pictures of the olden times
Glow in the cheerful fire.

Thank God for daily blessings, more
Than we have time to count,
Outnumbering all our trial-blasts
Adown life's sloping mount!

And as thy visit is so brief,
With little time to stay,
We will not let thee see our tears
For kindred far away.

And so we welcome thee, old friend,
As in the days gone by,
When brighter flowers bedecked our track
Beneath a bluer sky.
We may forget the braggart's boast,
As o'er the earth we range,
But honest hearts like thine with us
Shall outlive time and change.

THE TWO BROTHERS.

LIKE twin roses on a stem,
They expanded sweetly,
Till the northern doors let forth
Winds that blighted fleetly.

One fell off into the ground,
Where the mould was shaded
By the cypress and the yew;
Then the other faded.

Willie was the youngest called,
Samson he was older.
Willie died, and Samson wept
By the wayside boulder.

Here he sat, or stood, or lay,
Mid the mountain grasses,
Listening to the solemn sounds
Down the moorland passes.

And his face grew sadder still,
Nought his sighs could smother,
As he whispered to the clouds,
"I have lost my brother!"

Reader, do not blame the boy,
Though a pensive comer
On the hills among the heath:
Willie was his summer.

Willie was his sun and sky,
Willie was his laughter,
Willie was his joy of joys
Going before and after.

For they loved each other well,
Played and slept together,
Shared their triumphs, toys and tears,
Warm and wintry weather.

Long ago his father died,
Long ago his mother.
Reader, do not blame the boy,
He had lost his brother.

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING.

(RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO LOVELL SQUIRE, ESQ., AUTHOR OF "DAY BY DAY," ETC.)

THE Queen of May has donned her pearls,
Green shoots are on the tree,
Blue cuckoo flowers adorn the banks,
Where lingering violets be.
The shining sky, the earth and main,
Are ringing with delight:
But tears come stealing in mine eye
At such a pleasant sight.

What tricks she plays in dingle-bowers,
Where moss and ivy gleam,
And little birds are chirping loud
Beside the lonely stream,
Where spring-nymphs from rich blossoms peep,
With features half-alight!
But tears come stealing in mine eye
At such a welcome sight.

Last year the blue-bells came in groves
Down many a fairy grot,
And violets filled their nectar-cups,
And yet I saw them not,
Where hedgerow breezes flung their sweets
O'er vale and gladsome height;
And tears come stealing in mine eye
At such a welcome sight.

Then sickness with its mercy-chain
Confined me to my room,
Nor could I see the hawthorn buds,
Or note the gorse's bloom.
The sky-lark sang in vain for me
High on the sumbeams bright;
And tears come stealing in mine eye
At such a welcome sight.

Spring opened wide her flowery doors,
And let the perfume rise
Above the ringing mountain tops,
Beneath the bluest skies;
But weak and faint within the shade
I felt a sorrowing blight;
And tears come stealing in mine eye
At such a welcome sight.

My hand had lost its cunning power,
My feet could run no more!
Bnt now I saunter forth again,
Where Flora spreads her store,

And lifts her banners to the sun,
Green, red, or snowy white;
Yet tears come stealing in mine eye
At such a welcome sight.

What mysteries are unfolding now,
Mid tufts of living green,
Where waters drip, and mosses swell,
And flowerets rise between—
Where bird and bee and buzzing fly
Sip joys from morn till night!
So thank I God, with tearful eyes,
For such a pleasant sight.

Yes, thank I God whose balm of grace
Doth my weak frame restore,
So that with Nature's living self
I meditate once more.
All praise to Him who gives, who takes,
The God of boundless might!
My hymn of thankfulness I raise
For such a pleasant sight.

THIS SHALL BE MY PRAYER TO-DAY.

"LORD HELP ME."

MATTHEW XV. C., XXV. V.

THIS shall be my prayer to-day;
Help me, Saviour, on my way,
Guide me by Thy Spirit's might,
Fill me with Thy heavenly light,
Let my footsteps ordered be
Every moment, Lord, by Thee!

Help me in my daily task:
For Thy presence, Lord, I ask.
Should my spirit be distrest,
Quickly come and give me rest.
Show me Thy forgiving Son,
Teach me what His love has done!

Help me, Thou who hearest prayer,
In the smallest earthly care,
In temptation's trying hour,
In the winds that blight the flower,
In the storm that rocks the tree,
In the feeblest work for Thee!

Help me in distress and pain,
Yielding all my Lord to gain,
Humbly walking on my way,
Finding Christ my strength and stay,
Till through faith I gain the land
Where the trees of healing stand!

Help me upwards to Thy seat,
With the world beneath my feet,
Where resound the seraph's strains,
Where the King of Glory reigns,
Where high hallelujahs rise,
Sweeping over Paradise!

Help me hourly to prepare,
Patiently my cross to bear,
Guided by my Father's love,
Till I reach my home above,
With my friends and kindred dear,
In the fadeless hemisphere!

Help me in my prayer of praise,
Which my heart would daily raise,
For the mercies I receive,
New at morning, noon, and eve,
Coming from Thy loving hand,
More in number than the sand!

Help me, help me nearer Thee!
So, dear Saviour, let it be!
Closer to Thee may I cling,
Till the bells of welcome ring,
In the city of the blest,
And I gain eternal rest!

ZACCHÆUS.

LUKE XIX. C., I TO X. V.

CHRIST Jesus healed the leper,
Gave eyesight to the blind,
Then left the busy city
Of Jericho behind;
And walked amid the olives
By many a fragrant flower,
With look and touch of healing,
For all who owned His power.

Zacchæus heard of Jesus,
And pressed into the throng,
Desirous to behold Him,
As they proceed along.
But he was low of stature,
Nor found he then relief
For his excited feeling,
Although a wealthy chief.

So on before the people
With eager steps ran he,
Determined in his purpose,
And climbed a shady tree.
Zacchæus, O Zacchæus,
Methinks I see thee there,
With green leaves on thy mantle,
And sunlight in thy hair.

Hold on! The Master cometh,
He sees thee up on high;
He stops—He speaks, and pity
And love are in His eye.
"Zacchæus, O Zacchæus,
Thou needest not repine:
Come down and see thy Saviour;
To-day thy house is Mine."

How joyed the rich Zacchæus!
He quickly left the tree,
And soon with Christ his Master,
Within his house stood he,
And spake with broken spirit
A-near his mansion door:
"The half of my possessions
I give, Lord, to the poor.

"If I have taken falsely,
From either young or old,
My cheerful restitution
At once shall be fourfold.

For I would humbly travel
Along the Christian race,
Renouncing all to enter
The kingdom of Thy grace."

Zacchæus, O Zacchæus,
Thy Saviour speaks to thee:
"This day salvation cometh;
Thy waiting soul is free.
It needs no more oblation,
However fiercely tost,
For I am come to succour,
And seek and save the LOST."

And down the isles it travels,
And o'er the desert sod,
Where restless seas are rolling,
Where blow the winds of God,
Where cities rank their commerce,
Through plains by rivers crossed,
That Jesus came to succour,
And seek and save the lost.

A COTTAGE INCIDENT.

THE moor was silent as a lake
Within the summer wood,
Where Flora's favourites showed themselves
Reflected in the flood.
And o'er the lonely cottage roof
The murmuring breezes strayed,
And the first flowerets of the Spring
Were bursting in the glade.

A mother left her humble shed,
Upon the common brown,
To go some little distance off
Into a neighbouring town.
She charged her eldest girl of seven
To shield the children well,
And see, until her safe return,
That nought to them befel.

The birds were twittering on the trees,
The buds were in the glen,
And voices murmured up the heath,
And down the paths of men.
And as she thought of those at home,
In peasant vestments clad,
For whom the Lord provided food,
Her loving heart was glad.

Meanwhile a sorrow was at hand,
That mother could not see :
For Providence the future hides,
Or we should wretched be.
The clothing of the eldest child
At once was all a-flame,
And vain it was to cry for help,
Or shriek that mother's name.

So in a corner of the room
Her form she quickly laid,
And with the table, chairs and stools,
A barricade she made,
To keep the children from the blaze,
And further ills deter,
So that the other little ones
Might not be burnt with her.

And there the little heroine,
With godly feeling fired,
Watched by the children's weeping eyes,
In agony expired.
And angels from the city-gates
Descended on the moor,
And bore the spirit of the child
To Eden's shining shore.

Thus by an impulse all Divine,
Which God-filled minds acquire,
She saved, by calmness unsurpassed,
Her sisters from the fire.

And long shall worth her name revere
In Norfolk's lengthening vales,
And mothers blend her humble name
With evening's pensive tales.

MAY IN 1879.

A SONNET.

Ye are a trifle churlish with us, May.
I wonder why your walk is so remiss?
The winds come roaring down the rugged brea,
As if the gods had left their strange abyss.
Storm-hail and snow around the flowerets hiss,
Which bow their heads in weeping on their stems.
The rains rush down in torrents. Why is this,
When you were wont to kiss their diadems,
And paint them with the sunlight of your love?
Dear little robin shivers in his nest:
The green vales hear the plainings of the dove;
And cuckoo is almost a silent guest.
Yet buds are bursting by the tumbling floods,
To Nature true, for God is in the woods.

THE BILBERRY MAID.

HER face was round, her eyes were blue,
Her teeth like ivory white;
Her mouth was small, her arms were bare,
Her tresses dark as night.
A wreath of mountain thyme she wore,
With sedges of the glen,
And if you gently asked her age,
She told you she was ten.

The sun hung o'er her like a fire,
The stream went murmuring by,
The sheep-bells tingled on the heights,
The lark was in the sky.
But up and down, and in and out,
The moor-banks did she pass,
Stringing the berries which she found
Upon the slender grass.

Her mother died one winter's eve,
When snow was on the moor;
Her father sailed away in June,
And came to her no more.
Her sister went as soon as born,
And brother she had none;
And so Bet Brewer took her in,
Just when her feet could run.

A widow kind and good was Bet,
Who did a mower wed;
And so the orphan shared her home
For very love, she said.
And could you step behind the bank,
Within the hawthorn shade,
Your spirit surely would rejoice
To hear the Bilberry Maid.

"I love the birds, I love the flowers,
I love the insects small,
I love our Heavenly Father most,
Because He made them all.
And dearly love I Granny Bet,
Who gave me food and rest,
When mother died, and father sailed
Away on ocean's breast.

"I'll take these berries home to her,
As it is meet I should,
And show my love by loving deeds,
For Granny Bet is good."
A footstep mid the rustling heath
Attracts her wondering gaze,
And looking up she sees a sight
Which filled her with amaze.

A man was there with Granny Bet,
Of strong and vigorous frame,
With much excitement in his face,
As he towards her came.

And where the gorse and ferns were low,
She stood in girlhood's charms:
One moment—and the Bilberry Maid
Was in her father's arms.

That joy was wild with its own wine
I scarcely need repeat,
And tears were shed and kisses given
Like those when lovers meet.
Such bursts of gladness serve to cheer
The weariness of earth,
And fill the wilds with loveliness,
Where sweetest flowers have birth.

LEAVES FROM LONGFELLOW'S GARDEN.

THOUGH ye have lost your tints of green,
And I the hues of youth,
I hail you o'er the Atlantic waves,
Like notes of love and truth,
Which murmur in my Cornish home
Of him whom we so long
Have laurel-crowned, and placed amid
The masters of rich song.

Methinks I see him musing where
Ye once have spread your shade,
Entranced with sweetest melody,
When woods begin to fade.
Far off the eve-chimes greet his ears
Beside the river's rim,
And overhead the first pale stars
Hold forth their lamps to him.

And as ye quaffed your nectar-cups,
The honey-laden breeze,
For him who roamed where Fancy walked,
Brought more than mortal sees.
He reads the mystery which enfolds
The fragrant rose's ray,
And paints the beauty which up-glows
Behind the doors of Day.

Strange that such tiny things should be
With living instinct rife!
But genius hallows the cold earth,
And fills the stones with life.
And where true greatness runs its race,
Mid crags or castles old,
Directed by the hand of Heaven,
The dust is turned to gold.

'Tis thus ye bring the sound of song
Within my humble shed,
Like green pines murmuring in the wind,
Or brooklets o'er their bed.

And so I hail you from afar,
  Like lyre-cords 'neath mine eaves,
And listen to your music rare,
  Ye poetry-breathing leaves.

HIS LAST ACT.

The meal was o'er, the chapter read,
  The household gathered there;
And then with earnest solemn voice,
  The good man offered prayer.
The fire went out, the gas went down,
  And hands were fondly pressed,
The bolts and bars thrust home again,
  And they retired to rest.

Sleep came at last on silent wings,
  As fragrant as the rose,
With balm upon its healing lips,
  And kissed them to repose.
And o'er the flowery hills of dreams,
  With restless feet they ran,
Impelled by the mysterious winds
  With wonder in their van.

But swiftly from his palace-gates
The stern destroyer came,
And in the silence of the stars
Suppressed his mortal flame.
Without a sigh he crossed the stream,
Without a faltering breath,
Without one struggle of the frame,
And slept the sleep of death.

O what a sight awaited him
Ere midnight's solemn chime,
Beyond this sorrowing land of tears,
Beyond the reefs of time!
Clear waters by the living palms,
Where flowers their incense fling,
And friends, long sundered by the waves,
With Christ their heavenly King.

His time of rest as swiftly came
As lightning from the sky,
And he with God's own charioteer
Ascended up on high.
No watchers, as the pulse grew less,
To lift his sinking head,
Or mark the last sands dropping slow,
Save angels round his bed.

Be my last act an act as pure,
And lovely as his own,
Commending me and mine to Him
Before Jehovah's throne!

Then, like a child whose steps have strayed,
Yet knows he is forgiven,
O let me close my eyes on earth,
And open them in heaven !

OLD AGNES.

THE clouds were black as black could be,
The snow dropped from the leafless tree,
And hid the path along the lea.

Old Agnes tried, and tried again,
To find her way across the plain,
But it was all, O all in vain.

Then in the doorway of a shed
She sat, and bowed her aged head,
As cold almost as are the dead.

She thought of trials long passed o'er,
Of little feet that trod the floor,
And then old Agnes thought no more.

A prayer rose upward to its goal,
And through the falling feathers stole,
" O God, have mercy on my soul ! "

Phil Welch, a guider of the share,
Beheld old Agnes trembling there,
With snow-flakes hanging in her hair.

No food had passed his lips that day,
Yet he at once his steps did stay,
And led her by the arm away.

He took her to his own retreat,
And warmed her in the faggot's heat,
And gave her bread, and gave her meat.

His wife at once did tea prepare,
The children kissed her in her chair,
And tears of joy shed Agnes there.

The King looked down well-pleased to see,
And in the Book of Life wrote He,
"This deed of love is done to ME."

And as the firelight played with Phil,
A murmur did his spirit thrill,
"I have a mother somewhere still;

And she, perhaps, may lose her way,
And some kind friend may gently stay
And do as I have done to-day?"

The weakest step, the feeblest hand,
May show the way across the sand
Where flowerets fringe the other land.

No act of love has perished yet,
Though man may often man forget,
But is with Heaven's own signet set.

HANNAH DALE.

It scarcely can be thought that you,
Dear reader, should decipher true
The subject of my tale.
Within a cottage by the rills
She lived among the little hills;
Her name was Hannah Dale.

She owned a garden and a goat,
Some items from the years remote,
Old cans and gilded delf;
A chair which Shakespere might have seen,
A table like a mince-machine,
With sundries on a shelf.

Her knitting-rods like silver gleamed,
As morn and eve the sock she seamed,
In simplest linen clad:
And this, with eighteen pence a week,
The stipend of the parish bleak,
Was all old Hannah had.

A son had left her for the sea,
And years had gone, nor written he,
  And Hannah thought him dead.
She kept his spoon, his knife and plate,
His first sketch of the village gate,
  And daily aired his bed.

One afternoon—the day was fair,
As she sat knitting in her chair;
  The clock ticked by the screen,
The kettle simmered on the brand,
The hour-glass dropped its shining sand
  The antique globes between.

She had just cooked her meal of fish,
Then on the table placed the dish,
  And raised her eyes to pray;
When clicked the gate the elm beside,
And through the window she espied
  A man come up the way.

She had not time to leave her seat,
She had not time to move the meat,
  Or hush her strange alarms,
Before the door was opened quick,
And dropped the bundle and the stick,
  And Jack was in her arms.

O happy, happy Hannah Dale!
That meeting holds a precious tale,
Of tender sighs and tears.
And long lived Hannah with her Jack,
Nor any good thing did she lack
Throughout her latter years.

IF THOU SHOULD'ST TRAVEL.

If thou should'st travel far or near,
With one who needs the voice of cheer,
Drop some kind message in his ear.

Tell him of valleys far away,
Where fadeless roses gem the spray,
And love has an eternal day.

Tell him of One who came to bless
The child of misery and distress,
Himself a Man of griefs no less.

Tell him of love o'ercoming hate,
Of goodness in a low estate,
Of truth beneath a pondrous weight.

Say all are born a load to bear,
And suffer sorrow everywhere,
And bid him cast on God his care.

And he shall bless thee when the stars
Fling over earth their silver bars,
And ride upon their shining cars.

And though the years may hurry past,
With clouds of anguish overcast,
Thy words shall work His will at last.

Then speak—and leave the rest with Him
Who dwells between the cherubim,
And light is thine when suns are dim.

MARY MEEK.

No deformity or ill
Can o'erthrow the Spirit's will.
Oft outbeams the strength of grace
In the most ungainly face.

Mary Meek was born in May,
In a workhouse ward, they say.
Mary Meek was pale and thin,
With great moles upon her skin.

Mary Meek no beauty had,
She was lame as Ellen's dad.
Mary Meek was deaf and slow;
Mary Meek was limp and low.

Mary Meek had lost an eye,
Mary's mouth was half-awry:
Mary Meek, where'er she goes,
Always walks upon her toes.

Mary Meek an arm had broke;
Mary stammered when she spoke;
Mary's teeth each other trip,
Pushing out the under lip.

Mary had a crooked thumb,
Mary had an injured gum;
Mary's nails were always long,
Mary's words were often wrong.

Mary could not chew her crust,
Mary's hair had caught the rust;
Mary's was a curious nose,
And her one eye—how it glows!

Mary's gait was all her own,
Mary's elbows showed the bone,
Mary's voice was like a snore,
Mary's hands were often sore.

Stop, dear reader! Do not say
Mary Meek was cast away.
She was God's especial love,
All her treasure was above.

He came nearer to His child,
Than to those with splendour piled.
Houseless on the desert bleak,
Heaven was home to Mary Meek.

MARTHA WHITE.

"YON cottage by the aged thorn
Looks very naked and forlorn;
Who lives there, do you know?
The reed is hanging from the eaves,
Unless my misty sight deceives,
Upon the sill below.

"I knew it when 'twas very fair,
With shaven eaves, and roses rare
Which reached the very thatch.
A blackbird and its glossy mate
Now perch upon the broken gate,
Beside the swinging hatch."

"That house belonged to Martha White.
A clever man a book could write
About that shattered shed.
She died, Sir, of a broken heart,
When she from her young Rob did part,
Who went to sea, 'tis said.

"No tidings came her life to cheer.
If skies were fair, or winds severe,
She climbed the common's height,
To meet the postman on the hill,
And get the self-same answer still,
'No letter, Martha White!'

"And every week she thinner grew,
And every week she failed anew,
Till nought but skin and bone:
And then the church-bell sounded slow,
And she was buried down below
Beside the ancient stone.

"As surely as yon brooklet free
Glides onward to the solemn sea,
A-down the silent dell,
She died, Sir, of a broken heart,
Because no letter healed the smart,
From him she loved so well."

The speaker paused. The listener's eye
Grew dim; he heaved a bitter sigh,
A soul-outgiven sob:
And as his knees together smote,
These accents murmured from his throat,
"O, stranger, I am Rob!"

There is a sorrow which consumes,
And dries the blood like mineral-fumes,
  Until the world is dark.
O, child of grief, no longer stay,
But turn thee to the narrow way,
  And hide in Israel's Ark.

WHY ART THOU HEAVY, HEART, TO-DAY?

Why art thou heavy, heart, to-day?
  The clouds march up in dark array,
And hang their palls across my way.

I cannot see the sky or sun,
The very heavens themselves are dun,
And shadows through the arbours run.

My tears my watching ones distress,
And through my burning eyelids press,
Half-blinding in their swift excess.

O Thou who lull'st the winds to rest,
Speak stillness to my troubled breast,
And deign to be my soothing Guest!

My prayer was made—the clouds swept by,
The throbbings ceased, my tears were dry,
And heaven's great splendour met my eye.

The vales may vanish in the rain,
And music languish under pain,
But joy will surely come again.

The steepest path may yet be trod,
If we will rest upon His rod,
Nor lose our confidence in God.

ROBERT AND HIS WIFE.

A DEARTH of labour smote the poor;
Want knocked at many a cottage door,
Sighs rose, and tears were shed.
And Robert and his wife were sad,
For they no meal or money had,
And thus to him she said:—

"'Tis no use grieving, Robert dear,
Though work is slack, the price severe
For everything we eat;
And you must go to seek employ,
To save your wife and little boy
From wandering in the street.

"Go in the strength of Love Divine,
Your Father, Robert, too, and mine,
Who will your efforts bless.
I'll pray for you when eve is still,
And morning light is on the hill,
That He may send success."

He kissed them both, and turned away
Over the stile among the hay;
She watched him from the door,
Holding her apron to her eyes,
Gazing into the distant skies,
With summer stained all o'er.

And duly as the gentle Eve
Sat in the glen her locks to weave,
She sought her own retreat;
And Freddy at his his mother's knee
Prayed, "Bless my father by the sea,
And send us bread to eat!"

Full soon a cheering letter came,
And Freddy danced to hear the same;
And then away they went.
And Robert clasped them to his breast,
Where Providence his toil had blest,
Within a distant tent.

O, all the year was summer then;
The voice of love was in the glen,
  An angel at their side.
The God of truth had heard their prayer,
And made them His especial care,
  And all their wants supplied.

THE SOLDIER'S GRAVE.

BESIDE the river's reedy marge,
  Within a lonely glade,
Watched by the rocks and murmuring trees,
  The soldier's grave was made:
And there they laid him down with tears,
  Then slowly turned away,
And left him in his sleeping-place
  Until the last great day.

The clouds float o'er him in the sky,
  The waters rush along,
The flowers waft perfume on his tomb,
  The birds awake their song;
The lovely hues of morn and eve,
  Stream o'er the solemn sod,
And voices through the boundless waste
  Attest the power of God.

In duty's path he nobly fell,
Where Valour bravely led,
And War awoke his awful voice,
And British heroes bled
On Isandula's stormy plain,
Swept with disaster's flame;
And Honour sits on Melvill's tomb,
Linked hand-in-hand with Fame.

O! tears were shed by tender eyes,
In homes where woodbines trail,
And thin white locks are on the brow,
And childhood tells its tale.
And still the gushing drops will come
To embalm the truly brave,
Who sleepeth in the wilderness,
Within a soldier's grave.

TIMON AND HIS MOTHER.

THERE was nought else in Timon's case
But he should go and seek a place;
For all the household wanted bread,
And Timon's father kept his bed.

His clothes got poorer every day,
His socks had long been thrown away,
His little sister's face grew white,
And Timon could not bear the sight.

He placed his school-books on the shelf,
Then washed, and neatly dressed himself,
Stepped o'er the threshold with a prayer,
To seek for work he knew not where.

He felt resolved to act his best,
And let our Father do the rest,
Whose love doth all His creatures feed,
Assured that God would bless the deed.

His mother took her bonnet down,
And walked with him beyond the town,
As far as where the willows nod,
And bade him TRY, and TRUST IN GOD.

She loved her boy with forehead fair,
With bright blue eyes and curly hair,
As much as richer mothers do,
And felt the pain of parting too.

She kissed his cheek, she hushed his fears,
She never let him see her tears.
"Be honest Timon, though thy lot
Is but the meanest workman's cot.

"This need not make my Timon sad,
Or cause discomfort to the lad.
The happiest man of heart and head
Is he who earns his daily bread.

"In duty's path pursue thy way;
Sufficient is His grace to-day.
Pray morn and eve for help Divine,
And never let untruth be thine."

And she was gone—and he was there
Alone the pressing weight to bear;
Within his heart a nameless pain,
And one fair vision in his brain.

O, he had taken honest heed,
Nor caused that mother's heart to bleed.
Now first from home his footsteps tend,
With none but God to be his friend.

He sought for work with earnest face,
And soon he found a proper place.
Jehovah blest him more and more,
Till Timon had a merchant's store.

AMOS IVY'S FIRST SAVINGS.

THE day is fine. The July sun
With noontide splendour fills the sky,
And little vales, where brooklets run,
In summer quiet lie.

Glad children gather daisy-flowers,
And whispers tremble in the brake;
Sweet song o'erfloweth rose-hung bowers
Beside the crystal lake.

E'en the great town is bright with rays,
Which gleam on porch and gable old,
And span the courts and narrow ways
With bars of glittering gold.

And Amos feels the kindling heat
Steal all his gladdened being o'er,
As he goes humming down the street
By the post-office door.

His thoughts are with his failing sire,
His mother and his sisters three;
And each dear face seems smiling nigher
Beneath the household tree.

He left them at December's end,
When Winter through the wilds did roam;
And Amos wishes now to send
His first clear savings home.

The letter cheered his father's sight,
And pious drops he wiped away;
It made his sisters' faces bright,
It made his mother pray.

If every son would act as kind,
To those whose love no shocks divide,
How oft would sunshine fill the mind?
How oft would tears be dried?

AN ODE

ON THE TERCENTENARY ANNIVERSARY OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPERE,

APRIL 23RD, 1864.

PRIZE POEM.

OVER the earth a glow,
Peak-point and plain below,
The red round sun sinks in the purple west;
Lambs press their daisy bed,
The lark drops overhead,
And sings the labourer, hastening home to rest.

Bathed in the ruddy light,
Flooding his native height,
A youthful bard is stretched upon the moss;
He heedeth not the eve,
Whose locks the elfins weave,
Entranced with Shakespere near a Cornish cross.

Men pass him and repass;
The hare is in the grass;
The full moon stealeth o'er the hill of pines;
Twilight is lingering dim;
The village vesper-hymn
Murmurs its music through the trembling vines.

Starts up the musing boy,
His soul is hot with joy,
He revels in a region of delight;
The winds are rich with song,
As slow they sweep along,
And earth and sky are full of holy light.

Tongues trill on every rock,
Notes flow from every block;
The hawthorn shines with fairies; the clear rill
With pointed rushes hid,
The pleasant banks amid,
Trickles its treasures tuning down the hill.

A spell is on his soul:
He scans the mystic scroll
Of human passions wakened by the wand
Of England's noblest seer,
Whom England holds so dear,—
Great, glorious Shakespere, loved in every land!

He hears the tramp of steeds,
Sees War in gory weeds,
Roams through the forest, with delighted eyes;
Bends to the tempest's roar,
Weeps for the monarch poor,
And sobs with sorrow when dear Juliet dies.

Thus lay that musing boy,
Whose soul was hot with joy,
Environed in a hemisphere of rays;
And in the mystic light
The genius of the height
Brought him a lyre, which he, enraptured, plays.

He sang of him, the great,
Shakespere, of kingly state,
Who in his boyhood by clear Avon strayed,
Learning the lore of song
From feeble thing and strong,—
The great tree towering and the tiny blade:

The welkin's solemn height,
The lightning's livid light,
The thunder's mutter, the black whirlwind's roar;
The little child at play,
The red-breast on the spray,
The daisy nodding by the ploughman's door:

The hedges, hung in flowers,
The falling, pattering showers,
The dew-drops, glittering in the morning's shine;
The smallest film that be,
Which none but poets see,
All taught him lessons with a voice Divine.

Dame Nature oped her store,
Her secret inner door;
Boldly he revelled through her wondrous cell;
And none the song-lines read
Around and overhead,
Or knew the mystic chronicles so well.

He solved the human heart
Like mariner his chart,
And passion's every phase was known to him;
And when the full time came,
Forth burst the mighty flame,
To blaze and brighten till the stars are dim!

This greatly-gifted one
Was Labour's noblest son,—
The people's honour, leader, champion strong;
The glory of the soil,
The towering prince of toil,
The matchless monarch in the realm of song.

Loved now the wide world round,
Where human hives are found;
The prince, and peasant following the plough,
The sailor out at sea,
The yeoman on the lea,
The miner digging in the earth below:

The shepherd in his plaid,
The rosy village maid,
The warrior watching by the red camp fire;
The mother with her child,
The satchelled schoolboy mild,
The college student, daily pressing higher:

The dweller of the street,
In the great city's heat,
The mountaineer, within his lodge of reeds;
The silent solitaire
On the wide desert bare:—
All own his witchery where the daylight speeds.

Three centuries' solemn span
Since his great life began
Have borne their burdens to the hidden sphere;
Each epoch ever found
Him with new glories crowned,
Like the red sun when the wide west is clear.

And so, great bard, to-day
We weave thy natal lay,
And cluster gratefully around thy name:
England will ever be,
Dear Shakespere, proud of thee,
And coming ages but augment thy fame.

NOTE. The Prize consisted of a gold watch, a woodcut of which is now given for the first time with the poem. On the centre of the case is engraven a representation of Shakespere, encircled with a wreath of leaves. The competition was open to all; and more than one hundred poems, it was said, were sent in from all parts of the United Kingdom and also from America. The adjudicators were the late Right Hon. Lord Lyttelton, the late George Dawson, Esq., and C. Bray, Esq. The manuscript poem has been suitably framed and mounted, and contributed by Mr. Vincent to the Shakespere Mnseum, Stratford-on-Avon, which was gladly received by the custodian and trustees for preservation there. This is supposed to be the only working man's literary contribution in the place.

THE END.

FROM THE ILLUSTRATED PENNY POST,

JULY 1ST, 1879.

JOHN HARRIS, THE CORNISH POET.

It has been said with much truth, that a man's character is best known by his private letters. And if letters are such mirrors of the mind, no less are poems. We have snatched from the poems of John Harris many glimpses of his home, his family, and himself. He was born of humble parents, on the top of Bolennowe Hill, Camborne, Cornwall, on the 14th October, 1820. His father was a copper-miner and tributor. His mornings and evenings were spent in tending a small farm. John's first schooling was under Dame Trezona, from whom he went to another dame's school. The next school he went to was kept by an old man, who punished the boys with a flat piece of hard wood studded thickly with sharp nails. Harris could not endure this barbarity; and his next teacher was John Roberts, a miner, who having broken his leg, set up as a pedagogue. He was a pious Christian, and greatly influenced his scholars for good.

It was at this period that John Harris produced his first verses. "Having discovered the secret of rhyme, and the mystery of inventing couplets, I found it impossible to stop. Paper was a scarce commodity, and so I used the clean side of tea-papers which my mother had brought from the shop; and sometimes ink from the blackberries of the hedges." When only nine years old he left school to help a neighbour on his farm. He then worked with an old tin-streamer, who paid him three-pence a day to throw sand from the river in Forest Moor. Out in the open air all day, our hero was soon enkindled with an intense love of nature. Writing poetry was his favourite recreation after the day's work, and not a little sweet were the praises bestowed on him by his companions. "So far away from the noise," writes our poet in his autobiography, "and clamour of towns and cities, the rush of commerce and the roar of the manufactory, it is scarcely any wonder that I was held in the spell of song. The great granite rocks, silent in their loneliness; the weird tracks along the mossy moorland, trod by fairy feet; the miles of rustling heather, where the plover and partridge found a safe shelter; the trickling streams tumbling among the stones; the lights and shadows that fell upon the plain, and the rhyme-laden whispers falling down the distant heights, had more poetic power for my yearning heart than all the rigour and regime of books or schools." After reading this poetic prose, you will not doubt that Harris is an ardent lover of nature.

When only twelve years old, Harris went with his father down into the mine. It was about two hundred fathoms deep, and the bottom was reached by means of ladders, more than sixty in number! In a poem called "The Mine" he has given us a description of a Cornish miner's life and work. His going up at evening was his hardest labour—his "task of tasks" as he himself calls it. "Ladder after ladder, ladder after ladder, until they seemed interminable, and the top one would never be reached. Panting and perspiring, after stopping again and again, we reached the top at last, where the pure air of heaven fanned our foreheads and filled our lungs with new life." Even whilst in the mine our hero composed poetry; and when riding his father's horse, verses flowed in his brain to the measured tramp of the animal. Every breeze he heard stirring the trees was laden with words in rhythmic sequence. One of his first lyrics—To the First Violet—he shewed to Dr. Smith, of Camborne. The doctor, after reading it, said, "Try something

else, John; everybody writes about violets." "That may be true," was the reply, "but everybody who has any power of his own, will have his own violet, and his own way of making love to it."

It is not necessary to pursue the track of John Harris's life any further. Those of our readers who feel interested in the Miner Poet will read the volumes he has published. Following Dr. Smith's advice, Harris collected his best pieces of poetry, and published them under the title of "Lays from the Mine, the Moor, and the Mountain." This was in 1853. The volume was well received by the press. The *Athenæum*, October 4th, 1856, says:—"His writing to any other age would have been a marvel, and it is a phenomonen even in our own." His "Love of Home" is the outcome of his own feelings—lines from his hearth and heart. From the title of the book, we might naturally suppose that our poet was fond of alliteration, reminding us of Chaucer and Spencer, the nicety and discrimination with which he uses it. "An Indian Story" is full of sweetness and much good poetry. Any one carefully reading Harris's poems will be impressed by his love of home, love of nature, hatred of war and drunkenness. Of his first home his description is very vivid. His love for his mother is very deep. Whenever our poet sweeps his lyre about a mother, he seems to dwell on his theme with tenderest sweetness—such as can only outflow from a heart that has felt and cherished a mother's love and influence. Among his earliest effusions are some verses "To my Mother" Harris's love for nature is perhaps nowhere more distinctly seen than in "Luda: a Lay of the Druids." In it we find a fine description of druidical customs. Wild flowers have a special charm for him, and we are at a loss to know what to cite as illustrating this. How charming is his passionate address to "The First Primrose!"

John Harris was and is a very hard worker. He is a devoted lover of Shakespere. In 1864, the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of that poet was celebrated at Coventry. On that occasion a prize was offered for the best poem on Shakespere. This was won by our hero with his "Ode." It is interesting to know that there were a hundred competitors, and that the adjudicators were the Right Honourable Lord Lyttelton, George Dawson, Esq., M.A., and James Bray, Esq. The Prize Poem is framed, and hung up in the Shakespere Museum, Stratford. In concluding, we may remark that these poems possess a remarkable flow of words and purity of diction; and you will not deny that there is much charming simplicity and delightful freshness in the works of John Harris, the Miner Poet. We are happy to be able to state that the Royal Historical Society have conferred their title of F.R.H.S. upon Mr. Harris, in consideration of his learning. His volumes of Poems can be obtained direct from him, 6, KILLIGREW TERRACE, FALMOUTH, or of the publishers, HAMILTON, ADAMS, & Co., LONDON.

C. F. WESTACOTT.

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THE TWO GIANTS.

CRITIQUES, &c.

From the Herald of Peace, April, 1879.

John Harris, the Cornish Poet, has just published a new volume, entitled "The Two Giants," in which he attacks the monster evils of Intemperance and War. There is prefixed an interesting autobiography of the author. This volume is a very suitable gift for the young, and for the libraries of schools and chapels. Its pleasing poems inculcate principles of genuine Christianity and morality.

Testimony of the Baroness Burdett Coutts, February, 1879.

The book arrived safely, and the Baroness is much pleased with it.

From The Hull Miscellany, edited by William Andrews, F.R.H.S. August 23rd 1879.

We are pleased to welcome another volume from the pen of the Cornish Poet, Mr. John Harris. The title of the work is "The Two Giants," and like the author's previous books, it contains a charming collection of poetic gems, to which is added a well-written Autobiography of Mr. Harris. The giants are drink and war. Nnmerous well-executed illustrations adorn the volume, by the author's invalid son. We can with confidence recommend the book to the favourable attention of our friends, for it may be read with pleasure and profit. We trust John Harris may long be spared to enrich our literature with his valuable productions.

The writer's Collected Poems, in one large Crown Quarto volume, including "Lays from the Mine," "The Land's End," "Mountain Prophet," "A Story of Carn Brea," "Shakespere's Shrine," "Luda, a Lay of the Druids," "Bulo," and "The War Fiend," strongly bound in Cloth, with gilt back and side, and PORTRAIT of the Author. Price 12/6.

WAYSIDE PICTURES, HYMNS & POEMS.

From the Literary World, October, 1874.

A quarto volume of 246 pages. The author terms it his life-work, and it is one of which he may well feel proud. These poems contain the true poetic ring. There is much in them to admire and ponder over. We have upwards of one hundred Hymns full of pure Gospel truth. John Harris has turned many gems of Scripture into verse, and we claim for him no small place among hymn-writers.

From the London Figaro, May, 1877.

A handsome volume, with a PORTRAIT of the author. Mr. Harris narrates many adventures in which the highest qualities are evinced. He has a very keen eye for the grand scenery of his native county, and depicts its peculiar characteristics with great fidelity and wealth of expression. Considerable talent richly cultivated under no ordinary circumstances.

From the Illustrated Penny Post, December, 1878.

John Harris, in a fine bold poem entitled "Luda," describes the druidical rites. His works are not so well known as they deserve. The poem is in "Wayside Pictures"—a volume containing many stirring pieces and pathetic lyrics. This book would grace any drawing-room table.

From the Malvern Advertiser, February, 1876.

Few of us but have heard of John Harris, the Cornish Miner, the BURNS of the south, who, in his "Wayside Pictures" charmed us with his lovely fancies and liquid music.

From the Ladies' Edinburgh Magazine, April 1876.

John Harris has taken a place among the recognised poets of our day. He presents a contrast in many points to our own ROBERT BURNS.

From the Bible Christian Magazine.

With his HYMNS we have been delighted, and feel assured that some of them will soon find a permanent place in the collections of the day.

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TALES AND POEMS.

From the Literary World, November, 1877.

Mr. Harris is well known. There is a homely simplicity in the TALES, and a true-hearted sympathy with nature and man in the POEMS, which we gladly note.

From the Hull Miscellany, February, 1878.

John Harris, the Cornish Poet, is a noble instance of a self-made man. He commenced life as a worker in a mine, and now holds an important position in the world of letters. His "Tales and Poems" is one of the most attractive books we have read for some time. We hope many of our friends will obtain this volume of charming prose and poetry.

From the West Briton, April, 1878.

We have yet to learn the name of the minstrel that can match John Harris in his own peculiar walk of song. The TALES are as pleasantly and simply told as old world stories. Let the lovers of green fields and meadow brooks procure this volume at once. It is the very book for the season—fresh as April, sweet as May, and rich as the flowers and melodies of June.